Safe schools

Security solutions
How can a hardware manufacturer know how to make my school safer?

Because we have already identified potential problems specific to schools through the product development process. In developing new products to fit special needs like security, egress or lockdown, Allegion can take that knowledge and apply it to the school environment.

How do I know if I have any problems with my current interior and exterior doors?

Take our online self-administered school security survey. This assessment is an easy to follow list of questions that will help you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your existing school security, allowing you to focus on specific actions needed to make your school safer and more secure. This online self-assessment will help you discover security gaps and will provide a list of action items for improving your school security. Only a specialist can provide a comprehensive strategy for your school’s security. Once you receive and study the results of your online assessment, contact an Allegion consultant for more information on how we can help, (877) 617-7011.

I know there are building, fire and life safety codes that I have to adhere to when considering any changes to my school’s doors, but I don’t know what they are. Is there anyone who can help me understand security options that don’t violate those codes on a local level?

A local Allegion Architectural Hardware Consultant (AHC) certified by the Door and Hardware Institute is best qualified to assist you with building codes on a local level. These experts have a broad understanding of the practical application of local codes as well as the products to suit a specific need. They can also refer you to the appropriate local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for decisions on code interpretation. Allegion can also assist with many code issues and has a nationwide network of distributors with expertise on local building and life safety codes. For more information call (877) 671-7011 or contact us online at http://us.allegion.com/irst/Pages/contactus.aspx.

We want to continue to have a free flow of students and staff during class changes, but also want to keep particular doors locked while classes are in session. Is there a solution that provides both security and convenience?

Exit devices, the push bar type that run across the width of a door, can be outfitted with an electric latch retraction function. This means that doors can be locked or unlocked from a central, remote location, like the school office, and can be timed to coincide with class schedules as well. Exit devices with an alarmed delayed egress can also be used – they sound an alarm if someone attempts to use a protected door during restricted periods.

Sometimes students or teachers will prop open an entry way so they can come and go freely. This seems like an obvious security breech, but what can be done to stop this practice?

This is a security concern, inviting all kinds of potential problems if the hall is not monitored during classes. To
discourage this practice, a few mechanical changes should take place. Review what types of hardware are on
the doors. Doors that must not be propped open shouldn’t be outfitted with kick-down doorstops, door closers
that have a hold open function, or any hardware that allows the latch to be set in the retracted position. If the
doors have any of these types of hardware, you should consider a change to an electronically powered hardware
solution. One such solution is a monitor strike or door position switch connected to a central control panel that
can either alert that the door is open or trigger an alarm. Doors may also be locked during classes and opened
electronically between classes from a central location. Allegion locks are available with a classroom security
function designed exclusively for this purpose. It works by enabling the door to be locked from the inside, while
allowing free egress from inside and preventing entry from outside. The classroom function is available on both
electronic and mechanical locks.

In an emergency situation, we may need to gain access to an area that is usually kept locked. How do we deal with that?
To provide access to “safe areas” quickly, exit devices with electric latch retraction, electrified locksets, or
magnetic locks can be wired to a master switch controlled through a central remote location, such as the
administration offices. In the event of an emergency, the switch can be activated, allowing access to the “safe areas.” An electronic key, code, or card reader can also be installed to activate doors.

What can be done to limit tampering with doors and hardware?
One of the best ways to make tampering difficult is to use hardware that is designed to be concealed inside
the door itself whenever feasible. Another solution is to use tamper-proof fasteners that can’t be removed with
standard screwdrivers or drills. As mentioned earlier, hard-wired monitoring switches, delayed egress exit
devices, or electromagnetic locks can also help detect doors that have been propped open.

In a crisis situation, locking the classroom doors is often a first line of defense. Because some classroom locks are designed to be locked with a key from the outside, a teacher must go out into the corridor and manually lock the door. What can we do to lock classroom doors without putting the teacher in harm’s way?
There are three answers. The easiest is to keep the door closed and locked at all times. Another possible solution
is to replace or convert the existing locksets to Security Classroom Functions. A Security Classroom Function
lockset can be locked or unlocked by a key from either side of the door. In a crisis situation, the teacher simply
inserts their key and locks the lock from the inside. For additional security, doors may be installed with pull down
shades on the door window, blocking view inside the classroom between classes. The third option is to convert
to a remote standalone electronic lock which allows staff to lock the classroom with the push of a fob.

We have exit devices on the classroom doors that lead to an exterior courtyard. How can we lock them from the inside in case of emergency?
First, if the trim on the outside is one in which the lever, knob or thumb-piece can be unlocked to retract the latch,
the trim should be changed to a pull only. On the inside, the push-pad should incorporate “cylinder dogging.” This
means that a key can be used to lock the push-pad in the down position so it can operate as a push-pull throughout normal school hours. In the case of an emergency, the teacher simply inserts the key to release the push-pad. With the push-pad released, the exit device latch is engaged in the strike and the door is secure. Because a key is required, unauthorized locking and unlocking of the push-pad cannot occur. This same operation can be accomplished with an electric solution that provides the added convenience of being able to remotely “dog” the bar upon the first use of the push-pad or release the bar and latch.

I’m not sure if a Master or high-level key has fallen into the wrong hands. Does this mean we need to change all our locks or keys?

If your key system is old and you are not sure if a Master or high-level key has fallen into the wrong hands, you probably don’t need to change the locks. At the very minimum, the building should be re-keyed and strict key issuing policies and procedures should be established and enforced. This does not, however, eliminate the occurrence of unauthorized duplication of keys, even if they are stamped with “Do Not Duplicate.”

Our keys are stamped “Do Not Duplicate,” yet we hear that it is still relatively easy to have copies made at a local locksmith shop or even a hardware store. How do we know if our keys can be easily duplicated?

First, do a little research. Take your key to a local hardware store and a local locksmith shop. Because many local hardware stores are designed to serve homeowners, chances are they won’t have the correct key blank in stock. The locksmith shop, on the other hand, is more likely to have the key blank and the equipment to cut it. Many shops, although reputable, may copy the key without question.

After checking with the local locksmith shop, we’ve determined that our keys stamped “Do Not Duplicate” are easily copied. What can we do to prevent someone from copying a key without authorization?

The best mechanical solution is to utilize keys and cylinders that are protected by a utility patent. A utility patent is important because it provides an enforceable deterrent to unauthorized duplication of secured keys. Because only the patent holder can legitimately produce or authorize keys, any other use is an infringement of federal patent law. Restricted key blanks, cut keys and cylinders are furnished only through authorized distributors with a letter of authorization from the school’s representative on file. In addition to utility patent protection, some manufacturers also offer higher levels of security through geographic exclusivity. What this means is the key shape or secondary key cut is unique to the facility for a specific geographic radius. Patent restricted keyways such as Everest™ 29 have an exclusive undercut design that can only be duplicated by authorized locksmiths. This gives your security department control of key blanks and cutting equipment, and ensures that keys can’t be duplicated without authorization.
How can we tell if a key is patented?

The patent number will be stamped onto the key. However, even then it is a good idea to check this out with your key system hardware supplier. Some old keys may be marked with patents that have expired, and might be easily duplicated on the open market.

Throughout the years, we have issued Master or high-level keys to both teachers and staff so they could come and go as required. In addition, we have outside services such as mechanical contractors and food suppliers who need to gain access to the building. Because of this, we never know when someone has been in the building or where they’ve been. Is there a way to track people who come into the building after hours? What’s the best approach to handle this without compromising our staff’s ability to do their jobs effectively?

Most schools have traditionally offered a key for a single point of entry that is not part of the overall Master key system. In many instances, this is inadequate because there is no way to track who has been in and out of the building, and no way to keep them out of the building after school hours.

Another solution is to utilize electronic access control products. These are typically self-contained, battery-powered locksets that are unlocked by an electronic key. The key has a specific code that the computer reads almost instantaneously. In addition to the code, the key may contain information about when the code can operate the lock. If the code of the key and the time of day match what has been programmed into the lock, the user can gain entry. These locks also typically offer the ability to review who has gained entry and when.

Our doors aren’t really closing like they used to – sometimes they slam or won’t close properly. What solutions do you have for that?

There could be many things affecting the doors and it may be the doors themselves. Are the door gaps greater than 1/8”? Are there holes in the door glass? Do the doors appear old with rust or is the laminate peeling? All of these things affect a door’s ability to prevent unauthorized entry. Doors should be adjusted or replaced as required. If your doors are slamming shut quickly, you may need to replace the door closer at the top of the door. Grade 1 door closers are manufactured to meet the safety and durability requirements of a school environment. If your door closers have parts or fasteners missing, or they are leaking fluid, they should probably be replaced.

Technology is more prevalent in every aspect of our lives. Are there electronic door hardware solutions we should consider?

Definitely. In fact, nearly every mechanical solution that most people are aware of, or have installed, today has an electronic counterpart. “Smart” doors magnets, exit devices, door locks and strike systems are all available to help secure a facility. Our wireless products allow you to secure doors that were traditionally difficult to run wires to in the past – and increase the security throughout your facility. These products can be combined to develop the basis of a facility-wide solution or be used as added-in components in other systems.
What benefits are associated with electronic solutions?
There are many benefits associated with electronic solutions, however, most end users see three primary benefits.
First, electronic solutions can eliminate the hassles and concerns of managing a mechanical key system. If a credential is lost or stolen, re-securing your facility can be done in minutes, as opposed to days or weeks.
Second, data is available as to who went through a particular opening and when. Memory can record every event that happens at the hardware, even if and when a mechanical key is used!
Third, electronic solutions enable an end user to positively impact the logistical management of their facilities. Each individual can “carry” one credential, such as a code, electronic key, magnetic stripe card, or proximity device, as opposed to a whole ring of keys, and use that credential to open electronically based hardware solutions throughout a facility. Hardware can be programmed to lock and unlock at particular points in time and credentials can only be valid at certain times of the day or night. All of this functionality can be accomplished using a single database software package.
The impact of electronic solutions in a facility can be wide-reaching. Improved security, enhanced facility management and lower operational costs are just some of the reasons that electronic solutions can be beneficial.

We need a holistic security/crisis scenario plan. Can you help with that?
Although Allegion has years of experience and is the leader in providing consulting services on door hardware, key systems, electronic access control, doors, building and fire codes, we do not claim to be experts in providing a comprehensive security/crisis scenario plan. To help you in preparing your own plan, refer to the resources provided on these safe school websites:
- us.allegion.com/industries/education
- www.retasecurity.com
- www.safeschools.org
- www.keepschoolssafe.org
- www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS
- www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP
- www.safeschoolsamerica.com

This is good information as we want to try to achieve a positive teaching and learning environment while improving our security and safety. How can Allegion help?
Allegion provides a vast number of hardware solutions, which are virtually indistinguishable from what you are using now, but provide added safety and security for students, teachers, and other school staff.

We don’t want to change all of the locks in our school buildings. Can we convert the ones we have?
It depends on the manufacturer and the age of the locksets. If the locksets are old or are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, it may be the time to change the locksets. If the locksets are relatively new and the manufacturer offers conversion kits, the conversion should be easy and the cost reasonable. Ask your maintenance personnel to get additional information. If you do need to replace the locksets, look for a manufacturer with an established network of authorized service centers. Service centers can survey the facility, recommend replacement or conversion, and provide installation and ongoing service.
There are many door hardware and security companies calling on us selling products. What criteria can we use to evaluate them?

The best way to evaluate a company is by:

- Consult with a variety of sources and request comparative information.
- The recommendation of your maintenance personnel.
- Other schools’ input or recommendation based on their installed hardware.
- Asking for third party test data that confirms durability/low life cycle costs from a manufacturer.
- Looking for a one-stop vendor who can provide integrated safety solutions which include clutching, vandal-resistant locks, patented key systems, exit devices, door closers, steel doors, and electronic access control systems.
- Look for solutions, brands and manufacturers that provide training, designs built for preventative maintenance, technology upgrade options, open architecture, and retrofit possibilities.

This is a lot of food for thought and we have plenty of questions and concerns about how to improve the safety of our school campuses. What are the next steps? Who should we contact?

The next step is to complete your online self-administered security assessment on our website at us.allegion.com/industries/education/Resources/assessments. It’s an easy, step-by-step form that allows you to identify potential problems that you may never have noticed. Once that is complete, simply follow the instructions on the form to dispatch one of our highly trained door and hardware consultants, under no obligation, to your school. Each consultant is trained in specific product solutions as well as building, life safety and fire codes. They will review your survey results, complete an additional walk through, and may be able to provide simple quick fix tips, as well as specific recommendations for integrated door and hardware security solutions.
About Allegion

Allegion (NYSE: ALLE) creates peace of mind by pioneering safety and security. As a $2 billion provider of security solutions for homes and businesses, Allegion employs more than 8,000 people and sells products in more than 120 countries across the world. Allegion comprises 27 global brands, including strategic brands CISA®, Interflex®, LCN®, Schlage® and Von Duprin®.

For more, visit www.allegion.com