



KEEP SCHOOLS SAFE

from intruders as COVID-19 restrictions ease

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has led to many mental health challenges for both adults and children. According to one [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) study in June 2020, 31% of adult respondents reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, 13% reported having started or increased substance use, and 11% said they had serious thoughts of suicide in the past 30 days. Shutdowns have continued for more than a year now, and many people are on edge.

As schools return to full-time in-person classes, students, teachers, parents or others may be triggered to act in violent ways. Now is not the time to neglect your school's active intruder safety plans or stop conducting drills. On the contrary, it is more important than ever to make sure you are taking every step to keep your students and staff safe.

STEPS TO HEIGHTEN SECURITY

Does your facility have the appropriate security measures in place? The following is a list of important steps you should take:

- 1. Prepare your organization.** Make sure all staff members are aware of the process in case of a threat. You should be holding training events throughout the year.
- 2. Take potential threats seriously.** Any time a student or staff member reports a potential threat, such as a social media

post, written note or overheard conversation, administrators should thoroughly investigate the situation.

- 3. Implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Program.** All staff and volunteers should be trained in the program, and you should review it annually to be sure it is up to date.
- 4. Communicate with local law enforcement.** Agencies should have facility maps and copies of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program. Ask them to patrol your school regularly. Schools should enter into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with local first responders.
- 5. Perform annual background checks on all staff and volunteers who work with children.** One background check is not enough; you need to consistently perform criminal checks on all who spend time in your school.
- 6. Have a visible security presence.** Conduct security sweeps before and after events and throughout the school day.
- 7. Control access points to your school.** All outside doors should be locked, and visitors should be screened in a secure area that is separated from children by a locked door.
- 8. Keep your grounds well lit.** Establish a regular schedule to check lights.

- 9. Establish a clear plan for communication.** If an armed intruder incident should occur, you need to have a plan in place for communicating with staff and students during the incident, and with parents following the incident.

UPDATE YOUR PLAN

It is important not only that you create a plan for responding to an active intruder scenario, but that you also update it regularly. Establish a regular schedule for a review, during which you:

- Make sure school contacts are current.
- Make sure emergency contacts are current.
- Review procedures to determine if they still make sense to all involved.
- Provide copies of the updated plan to all involved parties.

BE PREPARED

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed schools in many different ways, and it is likely that some of these changes will be around for a while. That can be incredibly difficult for your school community to accept, so it is vital that you continue taking steps to keep your students and staff safe. For more information about active intruder preparation, visit [cmregent.com](https://www.cmregent.com).