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**You cannot reverse the effects of crime. Crime cannot be undone...**

**No explanations for bad school security, are acceptable.**

Throughout the world, school security is a number one priority, but not in South Africa.

It is important for entities such as principals, body corporates, teachers, to understand that they are responsible for the children when they are on the school's premises. This applies to any other facility that takes care of other people's children.

**There is no way around it, and no excuse that will be good enough to exclude you from this responsibility.**

There are various excuses that people like to use, such as "we do not have the budget for security". Some even blatantly say that they are not the babysitters and that the children's parents are responsible for teaching them manners.

First of all, for the time that the child is in your care, you ARE the babysitter, and yes, it is not a teacher or a caretaker's responsibility to teach children manners, but a child, no matter how troublesome and problematic, remains the school's responsibility.

Saying that a child is a 'problem child' that often slips out of the school grounds is no excuse for allowing it to happen. The school should know the exact moment that any person leaves the school grounds during school times.

The school is responsible for security measures to ensure that the children are safe. A child that leaves the school premises without permission during school times, is a tremendous risk for the child as well as the school.

A good example of this is when a teenage girl slipped out of the school grounds, during school hours, to go to the local coffee shop to purchase some iced coffees, in her school uniform, for her and her friends. She went back to school and luckily for her, and the school, nothing bad happened to her. During her little excursion, she did not

consider the danger that she put herself in. The school did not even know that she left the premises.

This school is located close to two borders. Predators are everywhere and with access to borders, someone could have easily grabbed her and disappeared with her forever.

Where would one start looking if the school did not even notice that she was gone? Within a few minutes, that child would have been halfway to a border, in the back of a vehicle, probably sedated. Nobody would know where she is.

This is a reality. It is not a story to scare you. These types of things happen every day.

Many similar stories do not have the same happy ending.

- This is why a Security Risk Assessment is a crucial part of the school's security system.
- It is the foundation of their security and sadly, most, if not all schools, lack this solid foundation that keeps the children safe.
- Schools also have "inner crime" and "outer crime".

**Note that I did not ask if you have security... I asked if you have a Security Risk Assessment. The general perception is that a Security Risk Assessment and Security is the same thing, however, in reality, these two concepts are two very different things, related, but different.**

A Security Risk Assessment will identify your security risks, and at schools, we have two forms of risk. On the one side, we have criminals that want to gain access to the schools to either steal equipment or perhaps cause damage to the school, and on the other hand, we have children that want to slip out of school for various reasons.

You also need to contend with people that want to get the children hooked on drugs. They usually hang around at schools, especially if they know there is no security and no visuals of what is going on around the school.

I often get the feeling that it is easier for school management to shrug their shoulders than to take responsibility.

It needs to be kept in mind that if something should happen to a child while they are supposed to be in school, but they left the premises, the principal will be held accountable.

The parents, the authorities, the public will ask questions, they will point fingers. Without a Security Risk Assessment, you are standing with your back against the wall.

Children remain vulnerable and easy targets, and it is your responsibility to keep them safe whilst they are in your care.

I get the impression that people tend to wait for something bad to happen first before they take security seriously. It is as if a child must go missing first before measures are put in place to ensure that children cannot leave the premises unnoticed.

That is a reactive approach, and it will do nothing to change the fact that a child went missing or was kidnapped or killed.

Crime cannot be undone.

All the best, ... till we speak again .....

*Andre Mardell*

If you think security is expensive, try estimating the cost of ignorance



Always in control  
**Alwinco**