**CCTV use in schools**

**Fact sheet 5 – FAQs and case studies**

Below are some FAQs regarding the installation of CCTV in Queensland State Schools.

***Why do I have to inform Emergency and School Security* (E&SS) *of my intention to install CCTV at my school?***

Informing E&SS of your intention to install CCTV via your school security advisor (SSA) allows E&SS to assist in ensuring your plans for CCTV are in line with the department’s [CCTV use in schools](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/cctv-use-in-schools-procedure) procedure, and also that proposed procurement and placement of CCTV equipment is suitable, and will effectively fulfil its intended purpose. Informing E&SS also enables the team to maintain a database of all schools with CCTV throughout the state, and to identify the effectiveness of CCTV as a risk management strategy at Queensland state schools.

***Why are such strict conditions required for installation of CCTV?***

The conditions of installation for CCTV as outlined in the [CCTV use in schools](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/cctv-use-in-schools-procedure)  procedure are required for schools to meet their obligations under the Queensland [*Information Privacy Act 2009*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-014) (Qld) and Section 426 of the [*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-039)*.* (Qld). A principal can be held personally responsible for a breach of the legislation, so it is of the upmost importance that the Procedure is adhered to. More information is available in [Fact sheet 1: Legislative considerations](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/fact-sheet-1-legislative-considerations.docx).

***Who is in charge of CCTV at state schools?***

As the principal is responsible for the installation and maintenance of CCTV, the system must be managed by members of the school’s Campus Leadership Team. It is not recommended that campus Information and Communication Technologies staff coordinate management of CCTV in schools.

***Can I put CCTV cameras in classrooms in order to supervise students?***

The department does not permit the use of CCTV cameras in classrooms for the purpose of supervising students. Under the [*Information Privacy Act 2009*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-014) (Qld), it is a crime in Queensland to visually record another person in circumstances where a reasonable adult would expect to be afforded privacy, without that person’s consent, and supervising students via CCTV as opposed to traditional supervision may inadvertently breach a student’s privacy.

***Can I covertly monitor staff with CCTV?***

No. By law, all staff are required to be informed of any areas under view of CCTV by use of approved signage. More information is available in [Fact Sheet 2 – When and where can CCTV be used?](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/fact-sheet-2-when-and-where-can-cctv-be-used.docx)

***How long do I have to retain footage?***

The length you are required to retain footage depends on its purpose, and whether the footage contains information about an offence or evidence for an investigation. More information about required retention periods for footage is available in [Fact sheet 4 – Management, use and disclosure of CCTV footage](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/fact-sheet-4-management-use-and-disclosure-of-cctv-footage.docx).

***What should CCTV cameras be looking at?***

It is recommended that CCTV be placed so that it covers entry points to the school grounds, areas of the school in which unauthorised activity such as trespass or vandalism is likely to occur, or areas where unauthorised activity such as trespass or vandalism has regularly occurred in the past.

***Can I engage the use of microphones with CCTV?***

The department does not permit the use of sound recording in conjunction with CCTV. Microphones will almost certainly record conversations between people without the knowledge of either party, such as two visitors in an Admin foyer, and will constitute a breach of the law.

***Why can’t I use ‘dummy’ cameras?***

‘Dummy’ cameras create a risk that a school that has identified a security issue has addressed it with CCTV, creating a false sense of safety and security. There is also exposure to liability for a school if there is an incident in a ‘monitored’ area, and video is subpoenaed when in fact there is none. In addition, ‘dummy’ cameras are typically easily identifiable.

**Case studies**

The following case studies may assist to give a practical idea of how the Information Privacy Principles prescribed under the [*Information Privacy Act 2009*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-014) (Qld) and section 426 of the [*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-039) (Qld) apply.

**Case study 1: Does my CCTV footage include ‘personal information’?**

The principal of a Queensland State High School is in possession of footage collected through a CCTV camera located near the administration building at the school. Following a break in at the school, they have reviewed the footage in the hope that it will include evidence that will assist the police to identify the intruder. The recorded footage includes a clear shot of the intruder’s face and the date and time that the footage was recorded. While the principal was searching the footage, they also saw footage of many students and staff members who were identifiable to them. The footage clearly reveals information about all of the individuals whose images were captured (i.e. that they were present at this particular high school at the dates, times and locations evident in the footage), and accordingly, the relevant legislative requirements apply.

**Case study 2 – Can I use CCTV in my school?**

The principal of a Queensland State High School wishes to have CCTV cameras installed at their school. In the past 12 months there have been seven break-ins at the school which have resulted in over $20,000 damage to school buildings and property. Three years ago, as a response to an increase in security incidents, the principal arranged for an upgrade to the perimeter fencing at the school and increased security patrols at the school. Despite these measures, there has been an increase in criminal activity at the school and the principal is concerned for the safety and wellbeing of their staff and students. They believe that the installation of CCTV cameras will assist police to identify intruders and deter potential intruders which will result in a safer and more secure learning environment at the school. Previous attempts to address security concerns were unsuccessful and the principal does not consider there to be any practical alternative to using CCTV which would achieve the same purpose. It is likely that the principal can establish a ‘legitimate purpose’ for the use of CCTV and the personal information that the CCTV will collect.

**Case study 3 – Unlawful use of CCTV**

The principal of a Queensland State High School has received many complaints from staff about

items of food being ‘stolen’ from the fridge in the staff room. The fridge is situated right next to the break out area where staff can eat lunch and socialise between classes. The principal wants to install a ‘secret’ CCTV camera in the corner of the break out room so that they can catch the ‘lunch thieves’. The proposed CCTV would capture covert footage of staff in an area where they could reasonably expect to be afforded privacy. Additionally, there are other options available to the principal for catching the culprit which do not involve the covert collection of personal information. Accordingly, this is unlikely to be a lawful use of CCTV.

**More information about CCTV considerations is available from your** [**School Security Advisor**](https://intranet.qed.qld.gov.au/Services/facilities/asset-management/school-security/Pages/advisory-service.aspx)(departmental employees only).