



How Should Schools, Colleges and MAT's Prepare for Martyn's Law Compliance?

Martyn's Law, formally the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 is set to change how schools, colleges, and universities approach public safety. Education settings with 200 or more people on site automatically fall into the Standard Tier, regardless of their size, and while full duties are not expected to come into force until spring 2027 at the earliest, the Security Industry Authority (SIA) has been clear that preparation should start now. At the heart of the Act are four core requirements institutions must plan around: lockdown, evacuation, invacuation, and communication. Here is what each one means in practice for the education sector.

Lockdown

Lockdown procedures are designed to protect staff and students when a threat is identified inside or near the premises, and movement would increase risk rather than reduce it. For educational institutions, this means having clearly defined lockdown zones, secure classrooms and offices that can be locked or barricaded quickly, and a system for alerting the entire site simultaneously and not relying on staff being at a desk to see an email. Regular, low-key lockdown drills, much like existing fire drills, help ensure the procedure becomes second nature to staff and does not cause unnecessary alarm among pupils when it matters most.

Evacuation

Evacuation procedures apply when the safest response is to move people away from the threat and off the premises entirely. Institutions should have designated evacuation routes and assembly points that are distinct from fire evacuation points where appropriate, since a security threat may require a different route or muster point than a fire would. Plans need to account for the practical realities of a school or college day i.e. assemblies, exams, sports fixtures and after-school clubs all change who is on site and where, so evacuation plans must be flexible enough to cover peak-occupancy events as well as a standard school or college day.

Invacuation

Invacuation procedures refer to moving people to a place of relative safety within the building, away from external threats such as an incident occurring outside the premises is a concept many institutions are less familiar with than lockdown or evacuation. It requires identifying safe internal areas away from windows, entrances and exposed spaces, and ensuring staff and students know how to reach them quickly without needing detailed instructions in the moment. For campuses with multiple buildings or open grounds, invacuation planning should also consider how to bring in people who are outdoors, such as those on playing fields or moving between buildings, when an external threat is identified.



Communication

None of the above procedures work without clear, fast communication, and this is often where existing plans fall short. Relying solely on email or a single announcement system assumes staff are at their desks and able to respond immediately, which is rarely realistic in an educational setting. Institutions need multiple, redundant channels, such as radios, mass-notification apps, or public address systems capable of reaching staff and students wherever they are on site, along with a clear chain of command so that whoever identifies a threat knows exactly how to trigger the right response without delay or confusion.

Getting Started

Every qualifying education setting will need to appoint a Responsible Person, register with the SIA, and hold documented, tested procedures covering all four requirements above. The Home Office's Section 27 statutory guidance is the authoritative reference point, and resources such as ProtectUK's free training and flowcharts are a useful starting point for assessing scope and next steps. Institutions that begin reviewing and testing their procedures now, well ahead of the 2027 deadline, will be far better placed to demonstrate genuine preparedness, not just compliance on paper.

This article is intended as general guidance and does not constitute legal advice. For guidance specific to your institution, consult the official Home Office statutory guidance or contact Soteria.