



Key Control Policy Writing Guidelines for K-12 Schools

This key control policy guideline and template, provided by Morse Watchmans, Inc., is designed to make the process of writing and adopting key control policies and procedures easier for school districts. It is neither a legal document, nor an approved key control policy. Each section contains examples of what school district key control policies can include, which can be modified as to what is appropriate for each school district. The final adoption of key control policy is written, determined, and managed by the administration and supervisory boards of each school district and not by Morse Watchmans.

Define the Key Control Policy Purpose:

- To secure all mechanical keys and locks within the school district.
- To protect the welfare and safety of the school population with authorized usage of keys.
- To prevent misuse of keys that cause security breaches and liabilities on school property.

Define the Key Control Policy Scope:

- To strengthen the security of people and property at school through key control accountability.
- To control custody and usage of all keys for classroom doors, equipment rooms, fleet vehicles, computer servers, and all other areas or devices that require keys.
- To implement a key management system for key issuance with accountability for school staff.
- To assign personnel responsible for overall issuance, replacement, and security of keys.
- To establish who are authorized users of school keys.
- To train all key users on policy and procedures for key control.
- To communicate protocol for access to keys with school first responders for emergencies.

Define the Key Control Policy Objectives:

- To increase efficiency and accountability of managing keys.
- To promote school security through the reduction of physical security.
- To decrease associated costs with replacing lost keys and rekeying.
- To maintain all keys as secured property to reduce liability.
- To prevent keys from being copied, borrowed, or used by unauthorized individuals.
- To better comply with FERPA regulatory requirements.
- To ensure that emergency keys are securely housed and readily accessible to local first responders.

Define the Key Control Policy Responsibilities:

- *Superintendent* – For authority and approval of the key control policy.
- *Principal* – For overseeing the key control policy and authorizing key users.
- *Administrator/School Resource Officer* – For implementing key control procedures and training new hires, substitutes, contractors and terminations as directed by the principal.
- *Facilities Manager* – For maintenance and inventory management of locks and keys.

Define Who will Amend the Key Control Policy and Conduct Audits:

- The principal/facilities manager/administrator/school resource officer will amend and update the annual key control policy as needed and submit it to the school district for approval.

Define the Key Control Policy Rules within the School District:

- Loss of keys or faulty locks shall be reported to the facilities manager.
- No keys shall leave school property to prevent security breaches and unauthorized usage.
- Grandmaster and Master keys will never be issued to any unauthorized personnel.
- Master keys used for re-keying doors will be managed by principal or designated facilities manager in a secured, locked, and approved key control system.



- Key users shall prevent the loss or theft of their authorized keys and never loan, misuse, duplicate, or let someone borrow them.
- Keys are not to be used by students at any time unless authorized by the school principal.
- The person or persons responsible for lost keys and damage caused by lost keys shall be subject to reimbursing the school district for associated costs.
- Keys shall always remain with authorized key users during the school day and not left in desks, offices, filing cabinets, or in personal or school vehicles.
- Keys should always be returned to a secure KeyWatcher® system at the end of the workday, so they are ready for retrieval at the beginning of each workday.
- When employment status ends, all keys must be returned to the key administrator. If a key is missing, replacement charges are the key users' responsibility to the school district.
- Key control audits will be conducted regularly by the principal and administration and facilities director at predetermined times and at the end of the school year.

Define the Procedures for Issuing Keys:

- Classroom keys will be assigned at or before the beginning of the school year with instructions for distribution by the principal, which will be fulfilled by appointed key control administrators for all full-time staff members.
- Any special requests for specific keys for a specific purpose must be processed by completing a key request form in the main office, authorized by the principal, and facilitated through the key control administrator. Special request keys must be returned at the end of each day. Advance notice of at least 7 days is required.
- Upon extended leave, resignation, retirement, or termination, staff members must return their authorized keys to the key control administrator and key control system.

Define Who is Authorized to Use Keys:

- *Grand Master Keys* – Principals and Facilities Managers.
- *Master Keys* – Principals, Assistant Principals, Administrators, and Facilities Managers.
- *Sub-Master Keys* – Principals, Assistant Principals, Administrators, Facilities Managers, Security Resource Officers, Department Heads, Full-Time Staff, Day and Night Custodians, Approved Contractors. Substitute Teachers, Temporary Employees. Other staff members will be authorized by the principal and then facilitated through the key control administrator for obtaining and returning keys through the approved key control system.

Define the Procedures and Costs Associated with Lost Keys:

- Contact the key administrator and complete a lost or missing keys form with payment.
- The key control administrator will generate a work order to the facilities department for all key and/or lock replacements.
- List the charges that will be incurred for lost grandmaster keys, master keys, sub-master keys, other keys, and damaged locks. Communicate the charges to staff members.

Define the Procedures for First Responder Access to School Master Keys:

- Outline in the key control policy where first responders can access a full set of master keys to all classrooms, closets, and all areas of the school building in the event of an emergency.
- Provide clear instructions for key control access and access authentication information to police, fire, and EMT departments, and all dispatchers for these departments.
- Provide a copy of the key control policy with the first responder instructions to each emergency department and the superintendent's office.
- Conduct emergency key control practice drills regularly, ideally with lockdown and fire drills. Invite first responders to an initiation drill with the new key control policy protocol.