

BOMB THREATS & SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES

Policy adopted by RISE Learning Zone:

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Policy Document OP-15

RISE LEARNING ZONE

BOMB THREATS & SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the emergency procedures in the school handbook and with reference to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, section 8.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/regulation/8/made>

Background

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, schools need to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place in the event of serious and imminent danger such as fire, bomb threats etc.

Staff members undertake a wide range of duties, some of which bring them in direct contact with an outside line on the telephone system. It is foreseeable, therefore, that individuals could receive a telephone call which is a bomb threat.

A suspicious package is a package or envelope found or received, normally by mail or courier or delivered in person, which arouses the suspicion of the receiver because of some indicator or indicators. It may or may not be preceded by letter or telephone threats or warnings. It may simply be poorly addressed, or it may be a hoax.

The likelihood of receiving a package or letter containing suspicious substances is remote. However, it is important for staff to be aware of the characteristics that are common to suspicious packages and the procedures to be followed.

Introduction

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the Directors of RISE Learning Zone ensure that appropriate procedures are in place in the event of serious and imminent danger. A duty of care is owed to all staff and visitors to safeguard them from risks to their safety. Our evacuation plans are appended to this document and stated in the school handbook. Risks of telephone bomb threats or suspect packages depend on a number of factors, including the political climate, the fact we are a school and our location in the community.

Although the plans will hopefully never be needed, it is essential to have arrangements in place for dealing with bomb threats and suspicious packages so that staff know how to act should the occasion ever arise.

Objectives and targets

This policy provides procedures and action to be taken by staff and students. These details complement other emergency preparedness aspects such as fire, first aid or school crisis plans. Although any bomb threat or suspect item may be a hoax or false alarm, instances are taken seriously. Our aim is to ensure that our local procedure, while effective, is not needlessly disruptive.

We aim to process all incoming mail, dispatch and courier deliveries at one point only.

Attached to our policy are the following forms:

- School evacuation plan: bomb threat.
- School evacuation plan: suspicious postal package.
- School evacuation plan: suspicious bag.
- School evacuation training log.

Action plan

All members of staff are trained in evacuation procedures. A training log is kept and a copy is attached with this policy.

Bomb threat procedures

Staff members undertake a wide range of duties, some of which bring them in direct contact with an outside line on the telephone system. It is foreseeable, therefore, that individuals could receive a telephone bomb threat. The following procedures must be implemented should any member of staff ever receive such a call. It is fully appreciated that someone receiving a telephone bomb threat may well be caught off-guard. We therefore ask all line managers to remind team members of the need to be diligent at all times and to be prepared to follow these procedures.

On receiving the telephone call

Listen to the caller without interrupting and make a note of the time of the call and what is said.

- Before the person rings off, try to ascertain:
 - Where the bomb is, ie the name of the building and in which area.
 - What time it will explode.
 - The type of package or container.
 - Who is calling, eg name of individual, terrorist group, etc.
- Notify the headteacher or the NGY person in charge immediately.
- Indicate that you have received a bomb threat and give:
 - Your name.
 - Telephone extension number (if appropriate).
 - Your exact location in or around the building.
 - Outline brief details of what has been said.

- Keep your telephone line clear and await further instructions, you may be telephoned for further clarification.

If for any reason there is a delay, e.g. if persons receiving the call cannot contact the headteacher/NGY person in charge and the manner, tone and urgency of the caller makes you consider the call to be a real threat, then sound the fire alarm at the break glass and initiate evacuation of the building.

Bomb threat alert

The signal that indicates a bomb threat has been received will be conveyed by appointed officers and nominated building fire wardens.

On the alert being raised

- Inspect briefly your work area for any suspicious packages, objects, etc. Do not touch suspect items.
- Evacuate the school carrying out routine fire drill procedures.
- Report anything suspicious to the headteacher/NGY person in charge on arrival at the assembly point.
- Stay in the assembly point and await further instructions from the headteacher/ NGY person in charge who will liaise with the emergency services.

Assembly points

All staff and pupils move in an orderly fashion and purposefully to their clearly identified assembly points.

The police will take control of the school and no one should be allowed back into the buildings until the headteacher/NGY lead contact in charge has received the all clear from the police.

Individual responsibilities

The headteacher/NGY person in charge

- The headteacher/NGY person in charge will decide on evacuation and sound the alarm within minutes of receiving information that a bomb threat has been given.
- The alarm is to be set by following the appropriate school procedures. Headteacher/NGY person in charge should then proceed to the clearly recognised assembly points.

If threat is received by reception

- Immediately notify the headteacher/NGY person in charge outlining details of the bomb threat and the name and telephone number of the person receiving the call.
- Notify the police using the emergency telephone number.
- Maintain telephone access (mobile or land line) which is not connected with the bomb threat, to enable vital communications to take place, until such time as reception is evacuated.

Support staff

- Upon hearing the alarm site/support staff should immediately open all doors/gates on site.
- One person should be sent to man each door and should prevent anyone other than emergency services entering the site by these doors.

Class teachers (supervisory staff at break / lunchtime)

- Ensure quiet and orderly evacuation and assembly in correct area.
- Check register and report to team leader.
- Do not allow pupils to move away from line until headteacher/NGY person in charge gives further instructions.

Suspicious packages

Suspicious packages may be received in the post as mail or may be discovered in any part of the building as unattended and unidentified packages or other items, for example unattended baggage.

Anyone discovering a suspicious package on site should make an appraisal of the situation and decide whether any further action is needed. Staff should draw on their awareness-raising training to decide the actions they must take when packages or other unattended items are reported to them. They will need to assess whether the package should be treated as suspicious. Steps that can be taken include making every effort to find the owner as quickly as possible.

Staff members should consider:

- Is the package hidden or does it appear to be simply left behind as lost property?
- Is it clearly suspicious eg batteries, wire, tape etc visible?
- Whether or not it is typical of the environment in which it is found (eg a carrier bag left in the entrance hall).
- Whether there has been a specific threat to the school or to the local authority (LA) or community.

A judgement will then be made whether or not to evacuate the premises and seek police assistance.

Staff procedures for handling post

Letter bombs may be explosive or incendiary, or chemical, biological or radiological (CBR). If we receive a suspicious delivery it is unlikely we will know which type it is, so procedures have to take into account all eventualities.

Our risk assessments give a good idea of the letter bomb threat to our premises – generally the school and community are a relatively low risk target. We may also receive advice from the police on the level of threat.

Staff members whose job it is routinely to handle post will be alert to possible risks and will be familiar with the possible indicators of a suspicious package such as a letter bomb. Line managers will ensure that these staff members are particularly aware of specific guidance and procedures.

In addition:

- We ensure that all sources of incoming mail (eg royal mail, courier, hand delivery) are included in our screening process.
- We ensure that all staff who handle mail or hand-delivered items are briefed and trained.
- The office that receives mail has ready access to washing facilities, including soap and detergent.
- Members of our office staff are aware of the usual pattern of deliveries and types of item and are briefed of any unusual deliveries

We advise all staff to:

- Open post with letter openers or other implements
- Open packages with the minimum movement.
- Not to blow into envelopes or shake out the contents.
- Keep their hands away from their noses and mouths while opening mail.
- Always wash their hands after opening mail.
- Members of staff are aware that, should packages suspected of containing biological, chemical or radiological material ever be received, they should ideally be placed in a double sealed bag.
- We do not consider, at this time, that staff members handling post need personal protective equipment such as latex gloves and face masks. However, should a need ever be identified such equipment will be provided.
- We have prepared signs for display in the event of a suspect or actual attack.

Evacuation

The purpose of evacuation is to move people from an area where they might be at risk to a place of lesser risk. Evacuation will not always be the first response. Advice

will be sought from the police where possible. Limited evacuation of sections of the building may be appropriate where suspicious packages are found.

Evacuation may need to take place in response to:

- A threat call directly to the building.
- A threat call received elsewhere and notified to you by the police.
- The discovery of a suspicious item in the building or the discovery of a suspicious item or vehicle outside our building.
- The discovery of a suspicious item elsewhere notified to school by the police or neighbours.

The headteacher/NGY person in charge will determine whether or not to evacuate the school based on the available information, including advice from emergency services. The routine fire assembly point may not be the appropriate place to evacuate to, although this might be used as an initial staging post before redirecting occupants elsewhere. If, for example, an evacuation route would take people past a suspect device or vehicle outside school or through an area believed to be contaminated by CBR materials, evacuation may be the riskiest course of action.

Alternative evacuation plans will be brought into effect should the need arise. The use of alternative evacuation plans will be practiced as part of our normal procedures to ensure there is safe and efficient movement away from the building.

Our evacuation plans:

- Full evacuation outside the building to the cemetery of St. Nicholas.
- Evacuation of part of the building if the device is small and thought to be confined to one location (e.g. a letter bomb discovered in an office).
- Evacuation of all staff apart from designated searchers.
- Full or partial evacuation to an internal safe area.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be monitored regularly for any changes in legislation which may have an effect and will be evaluated in the light of any changes to evacuation drills, procedures or risk assessments undertaken.

Reviewing

The headteacher and Board of Directors will carry out a review of this policy on a regular basis to ensure that any new or changed legislation is adhered to.

SCHOOL EVACUATION PLAN – BOMB THREAT

This evacuation plan has been discussed with the emergency services.

How the evacuation will be communicated to staff.
Designated routes and exits.
Designated members of staff to act as marshals during the evacuation and as contact points once the assembly area is reached.
How this plan is compatible with any plans made by others who share the premises.
Designated routes and exits to an alternative assembly point.
Welfare of staff/students while the building is evacuated.

If the threat is confirmed as a hoax, the headteacher/person in charge will communicate that it is safe to re-enter the building. The routes and exits used to evacuate the building should be used for reentry.

NO-ONE SHOULD RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

If the threat is real, staff and pupils will be moved to a safe location and emergency communication systems will be deployed.

After care: counselling will be provided for any staff or students who may feel anxious following the incident.

SCHOOL EVACUATION PLAN – SUSPICIOUS POSTAL PACKAGE

This evacuation plan has been discussed with the emergency services.

How the evacuation will be communicated to staff.
Designated routes and exits.
Designated members of staff to act as marshals during the evacuation and as contact points once the assembly area is reached.
How this plan is compatible with any plans made by others who share the premises.
Designated routes and exits to an alternative assembly point.
Welfare of staff/students while the building is evacuated.

If the threat is confirmed as a hoax, the headteacher/person in charge will communicate that it is safe to re-enter the building. The routes and exits used to evacuate the building should be used for reentry.

NO-ONE SHOULD RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

If the threat is real, staff and pupils will be moved to a safe location and emergency communication systems will be deployed.

After care: counselling will be provided for any staff or students who may feel anxious following the incident.

SCHOOL EVACUATION PLAN – SUSPICIOUS BAG

This evacuation plan has been discussed with the emergency services.

How the evacuation will be communicated to staff.
Designated routes and exits.
Designated members of staff to act as marshals during the evacuation and as contact points once the assembly area is reached.
How this plan is compatible with any plans made by others who share the premises.
Designated routes and exits to an alternative assembly point.
Welfare of staff/students while the building is evacuated.

If the threat is confirmed as a hoax, the headteacher/person in charge will communicate that it is safe to re-enter the building. The routes and exits used to evacuate the building should be used for reentry.

NO-ONE SHOULD RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO.

If the threat is real, staff and pupils will be moved to a safe location and emergency communication systems will be deployed.

After care: counselling will be provided for any staff or students who may feel anxious following the incident.

SCHOOL EVACUATION PLAN – TRAINING LOG

The training log should be updated half-termly or more frequently if directed by the evacuation officer.

Designation of Staff	Date of Last Training	Initials of Staff Attended
Leadership team – whole school management.		
Full-time teachers and teaching assistants.		
Part-time teachers and teaching assistants.		
Office/administration staff.		
Premises/catering/supervisory staff.		