



BOMB THREAT AND EVACUATION POLICY

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the School's Fire Policy and Health and Safety Policy.

The receipt or setting of explosive or other potential dangerous devices (bomb threats) is a potential hazard in all premises. The consequences of an incident within the School could be potentially serious. The aim at all times must be to ensure that effective procedures are in place and are clearly understood to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of pupils, staff and visitors. All School staff have a responsibility to observe the Bomb Threat policy and procedure at all times. It is imperative that all staff understand what to do in the event of a bomb threat to ensure the safety of the colleagues, pupils, the general public and themselves.

Responsibilities for Bomb Threat Precautions

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for managing all bomb threat situations within the school. To assist the Headmaster, the responsibility for the supervision of day to day precautions and the co-ordination of staff action in a bomb threat emergency is delegated to the Business Manager, Senior Deputy Head (Senior School), Head (Prep School) and if the event occurs at night at the Senior School, the Head of Boarding. In this event, the procedures should be initiated without delay but efforts should be made to contact, by telephone the Headmaster and the Emergency Management Team (as detailed in the EMP).

Headmaster responsibilities

The Headmaster, or in their absence, the Business Manager is responsible for the:

- Implementation of the procedures and precautions when dealing with bomb threats.
- Ensuring all staff receive the necessary training and that they clearly understand the procedures for bomb threats.
- Co-ordinating and directing pupils, staff and general public in the event of a bomb threat.
- Reporting all bomb threat incidents to the police.

Staff responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility:

- To know what to do in the event of a bomb threat and take appropriate action.
- To know what to do if a suspicious package/letter is discovered and take appropriate action.
- To partake in bomb alert training and evacuation.

Procedure instructions

Instructions to all staff in the event of a bomb threat alert

These instructions set out the procedure to be adopted in the event of a bomb threat becoming apparent in any of the school building or surrounding property.

All actions resulting from a bomb threat will be co-ordinated by the Headmaster, Head (Prep), or in their absence the Deputy Heads.

Dealing with Telephone warnings

Terrorists, militants, extremists, (eg animal rights, etc) frequently, but not always, give a telephone warning of bomb explosions. So, unfortunately, do hoaxers whose threat is empty. A warning may be received that any of the school premises are at risk. In such cases we will have to decide how to respond. In particular we will have to decide whether to evacuate the premises. In ALL cases, whether or not the person receiving the call considers the threat to be credible they should:

- Telephone the police immediately on **999**
- Notify the Headmaster or their deputy
- Search the premises
- Consider whether to evacuate the premises or not

In all cases it is important to telephone the Police immediately with details of the call.

Responding to warning calls often involves making difficult decisions. What is often overlooked, however, is how important and yet how difficult it is to obtain the maximum amount of useful information from the call. The following advice is designed to aid this:

- Remain calm
- Try to obtain as much information from the caller as possible. (see appendix A)
- Make a note of the callers details (either from the display screen on your phone, or by calling 1471)
- Report the call to the Headmaster or their deputy

Search

Searches may be undertaken as a matter of routine or in response to a specific warning. It is not always necessary to initiate an evacuation.

Police will not search themselves for 2 good reasons, they don't know the layout of the building and they don't know what should and shouldn't be there and looks 'normal'.

In all cases where a bomb threat is received, the Headmaster will nominate the Police immediately and advise them of what action is being taken.

Search Plan

Because of the geographical spread of the School buildings and grounds it is only considered practicable to consider a search in the event that a particular building(s) is identified as a target, ie, by the bomb threat call. It is also unlikely that a bomb would have been planted anywhere other than an area that had general accessibility.

Searches, are generally, only likely to be possible during daylight/school hours, when there are several staff on duty. In the event of an evening/weekend threat it is likely that the person on duty will be required to co-ordinate an evacuation and maintain communications.

If a decision is made to conduct a search. Search teams should be formed from staff nominated to search those areas with which they are most familiar. Numbers in each team will be dependent on the size of each area being searched. The Headmaster will initiate a search by instructing members of staff and allocating an area/room for each of them to search.

What to look for

It is difficult to offer guidance to Search Teams about the appearance of a Bomb as they can be disguised in many ways. What the search team is looking for is an unidentified object.

- That should not be there
- That cannot be accounted for
- That appears to be out of place

How to search

Each search should begin at the entrance/threshold to the room/area. Each searcher/team should stand in the entrance, standing still and look around the room. They should note the contents of the room and make a quick assessment of the area, which needs special attention. They should look for any unusual lights, (including small light sources known as LEDs which are often used in Bombs). They should also listen for any unusual noises, particularly ticking or whirring sounds. If anything unusual is seen they should inform the Headmaster immediately.

The search should be conducted methodically, moving in one direction around the area.

- The *first sweep* should be around the **edges of the room/area**. Taking in the walls from top to bottom and the floor area immediately below the wall. Checks should be made inside fireplaces, behind curtains, pelmets and behind/beside furniture around the edges of the room. The sweep should start and finish at the entrance to the room/area.
- The *second sweep* should take in the **furniture and floor areas**. Furniture should NOT be moved but drawers should be opened and gaps in and under furniture should be explored. If the floor covering shows recent evidence of disturbance, then this should be reported.
- The *third sweep* should take in the **ceiling area**. Start in one corner and systematically search the whole area.

After the search has been completed and the findings should be reported immediately to the Headmaster or their deputy.

If a suspicious package/object is found:

Follow the golden rule

DO NOT TOUCH OR MOVE

IF POSSIBLE, LEAVE A DISTINCTIVE MARKER NEAR (NOT TOUCHING) THE DEVICE.

MOVE AWAY FROM THE DEVICE TO A DESIGNATED CONTROL POINT, LEAVING THE LIGHTS ON.

INFORM THE HEADMASTER OR THEIR DEPUTY

THE HEADMASTER WILL IMPLEMENT THE EVACUATION PLAN

Signs and symptoms of suspicious packages

There are a number of signs that may lead you to become suspicious of a letter or parcel. By themselves these signs may be innocent, but perhaps a combination of a few will need a cautious approach.

A simple mnemonic to remember is the **7Ss**:

SIZE: is the letter/parcel big enough to house a device without seeming obvious, eg. Jiffy bag, video tape, etc

SENDER: do you recognise who sent it from the postmark, label or typeface? Do they match? Can you check with the recipient?

SHAPE: Is the letter/parcel not uniform

STAMPS: As there no stamps on the parcel, or is it over stamped? Is the postmark blurred, smudged or missing all together?

SEAL: Has the letter/parcel been sealed more securely, denoting that it contains something that must not fall out?

STAIN: is there an oily stain showing through the envelope or oily fingerprints on the outside? Some explosives weep/sweat small amounts of liquid that will produce a stain.

SMELL: Explosives often smell, particularly the Nitro-Glycerine and Nitro-toluene. A strange smell such as almonds or marzipan should therefore be treated with suspicion. Equally an overpowering smell such as perfume, could be used to cover up or disguise other smells.

Evacuate

This decision is normally taken by the Headmaster or their deputy. The police should have already been called and will at this point be providing advice as to whether to evacuate or not.

There are 4 actions available to the Headmaster. Which one is chosen depends upon their assessment of the threat which the situation presents. The choices are:

1/ Do Nothing – this action may appear attractive if the threat appears to have come from a drunk or a child, but it should not be adopted unless the Headmaster is absolutely sure that it is a malicious call or prank. If there is the **slightest** doubt, then an alternative option should be actioned.

2/ Search and then evacuate if necessary – this choice of course means that people will be in the building/surround areas longer whilst a search is conducted. If nothing is found the Headmaster may decide not to evacuate the premises and declare the premises safe. This option may be appropriate if the assessment of the threat level is low.

3/ Search and partial evacuation – when the threat level is considered to be moderate, but there is no reason to believe an explosion may be imminent, or if the suspect device is small (ie a letter bomb) and some of the premises may be deemed to be a safe distance from the threat.

4/ Evacuate immediately – if a call is received and the Headmaster considers the threat to be of high risk, there will be a case for evacuating immediately without conducting a search, especially if there is possibility of an imminent explosion. When the time of the explosion has been disclosed in a threat call, then the Headmaster must ensure that any evacuation or search has been completed at least 20 minutes prior to the deadline, regardless of whether a device has been discovered or not.

Evacuation

If a decision to evacuate the premises is made, for speed and convenience the Fire Evacuation procedures are implemented. **Fire assembly points should be reviewed if they are considered to be too close to the threat.** Evacuees should be told to gather at least 400 metres from the premises. In some circumstances the police may deem that 1000 metres is more appropriate. Police advice should be sought in all cases. Ideally all evacuees should be asked to take all personal belongings with them, but this will not always be possible as it contradicts the Fire Evacuation procedures.

Bomb Assembly points

For the Senior School – Anglo Chiropractic College Car Park.

For the Prep School – Parkstone Golf Club Car Park.

Decision to Reoccupy

This decision falls to the Headmaster or their deputy. This decision should be taken in conjunction with detailed advice from the Police.

Appendix A

Actions to be taken on receipt of a bomb threat:

- Record the exact wording of the threat.

Ask the following questions of the caller:

- Where is the bomb right now?
- When is it going to explode?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will cause it to explode?
- Did you place the bomb?
- Why?
- What is your name?
- What is your address?
- What is your telephone number?

Record the time of the call, the number being called from.

Inform the Headmaster

Record information about the caller:

- Their Sex M/F
- Approximate age
- Nationality
- The language they use: Well spoken, irrational, taped message, offensive, incoherent, message read out
- The callers voice: Calm, excited, crying, angry, nasal, slurred, slow, lisp, do they have an accent
- Any background noises: Street Noise Music PA System Other