



## **Bomb Threat Procedures**

Updated: 10-19  
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Approved by: SHCC

**These Procedures apply throughout the School from the EYFS to Year 6.**

### **Introduction**

This document sets out School procedures in the event of a bomb threat.

Bomb threats can be communicated in several ways including by phone, e-mail, social media, by post or a written note, face-to-face or by leaving a suspicious item/vehicle on the premises. Threats can also be delivered by a third party who is not related to the intended victim.

Any threat received should be treated seriously by all staff and immediate action must be taken by informing the responsible person and the police/London Fire Brigade by calling (9)999 and giving them as much information as possible about the threat.

### **Responsible Person**

The Bursar has overall responsibility for co-ordination of the School's response in the event of a bomb threat.

### **Threats made over the phone**

Threats can be received over the phone, warning an organisation that a bomb activation is imminent. Some staff have access to a direct line as part of their work duties and may therefore be the recipient of the threat. These threats can be hoaxes that are intended to cause alarm and disruption to an organisation or community. Whether you suspect the call to be a hoax or not, it is not your responsibility to determine this.

If the threat is received by phone, the recipient should:

- Stay calm and listen to the caller carefully
- Gather as much information as possible during the phone call, ideally using the checklist in the Appendix hereto
- If possible, keep notes of exactly what is said
- If possible, alert another member of staff about the threat so that they can call (9)999 immediately; and
- If the threat is received by a text message or similar, the recipient must not reply, forward or delete the message
- Notify the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT)

## **Threats made by e-mail or social media**

Threats can be made via online platforms such as e-mail and social media sites. All School staff and Governors have a work e-mail address and all staff and Governors may be using social media platforms, and may therefore be the recipient of this type of threat.

If the threat is made by e-mail or social media, the recipient should:

- Stay calm
- Not reply, forward or delete the message
- Note the sender's name, e-mail address, username or ID
- If possible, save and print the message; this may be best done by taking a screen shot
- Preserve all web log files for the School to assist with the police investigation for the seven days prior to the threat and two days after the threat has been made
- Notify the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT)

## **Threats made by written note**

If the threat is made by written note, the recipient should:

- Stay calm
- Handle as little as possible
- Do not let any other person touch the post/note; and
- Treat it as evidence
- Hand it to the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT) to retain for the police

## **Threats made by post (e.g. suspicious packages/mail)**

School Office staff are responsible for handling the post when it is delivered on to the School site and are trained in possible indicators that would alert a suspicious package. Suspicious mail/packages can come in a form of an envelope or a package, delivered by hand, by courier or through the post.

Potential Indicators of a Suspicious Package:

- Discolouration, crystals on surface, strange odours or oily stains
- Envelope with powder or powder-like residue
- Excessive tape or string
- Unusual size or weight, given the size
- Lopsided or odd-shaped envelope
- Postmark that does not match return address
- Postmark foreign or unfamiliar
- Restrictive endorsements such as 'Personal' or 'Confidential'
- Handwritten, block printed or poorly-typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Job title but no name
- Misspelling of common words
- No return address

- Items addressed to individuals who are no longer at the School

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other characteristics which make you suspect a package.

If the threat is made by post, the recipient should:

- Stay calm
- Not touch the package further or move it to another location
- Not try to clean up any substances
- Clear the immediate area and keep others away
- Shut windows and doors in the room and leave the room, but keep themselves separate from others and available for medical examination
- Switch off any room air conditioning system
- List the names of the persons in the immediate area of the mail/package
- Notify the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT) who should switch off the building air conditioning system, close all fire doors and windows and ensure that all staff, pupils and visitors are evacuated in accordance with the School's Evacuation Procedure .

Staff members who open postal letters or packages are advised to do the following:

- Open letters and packages with an implement
- Try and not move the item whilst opening it
- Before taking out the contents, look inside the envelope, parcel etc.
- Wash hands after opening mail

### **Threat from a suspicious item/vehicle found on the premises**

Packages may also be found left or abandoned on the premises. In this event, the finder must:

- Leave the package where it was found. Do not disturb it. Do not try to clean up any substances
- Clear all people from the immediate area, keep others away and cordon off the immediate area
- Direct people to a designated area away from the substance/package; and
- Notify the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT) and follow her guidance

### **If the threat is made face-to-face, the recipient should:**

- Stay calm
- Try to remember and record as many distinguishing characteristics of the person as possible; and
- Notify the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT) as soon as possible and follow her advice

## **Assessing the credibility of the bomb threat**

Evaluating the credibility of a threat is critical. Although the police will assess the threat at the earliest opportunity, an initial assessment may need to be made by the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT) who should consider the following:

- Is the threat part of a series? If so, what has happened elsewhere or previously?
- Is the location of the claimed bomb(s) known with precision? If so, is a bomb visible at the location identified?
- There may be an intention to influence behaviour; is there any reason to believe their words?
- If the threat is imprecise, could an external evacuation inadvertently move people closer to the hazard?
- Is a suspicious device visible?

## **Alerting other staff**

Fire drill procedures will be used in the case where an evacuation is needed, whilst avoiding the area affected by the bomb threat. It is sensible to have a code for 'bomb threat' that will alert staff to act quickly while not cause panic: **our code is 'Corridor Lockdown.'**

If the threat is outside the School then Lockdown Procedures will be followed. See the Lockdown Procedures Notice which is in each room of the School

## **Evacuation of the premises**

If the location of the device is known and it is inside the School premises, it may be determined that staff will be safer outside the premises. However, if the device is known to be outside the premises, then protected spaces on-site may be safer. It must also be considered that the location of the bomb, or potential bomb, may not be as the caller described it. Attackers can use the tactic of giving misleading information in order to cause the evacuation of people to the point of actual danger. If there is a safe, protected space within the building you should use this (see protected spaces).

## **Evacuation marshals and assembly points**

The following members of staff are designated evacuation marshals:

- The Headteacher (Admin corridor)
- The Assistant Head (St Luke's + Gatehouse)
- The Bursar (St Mary's)
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) (St Mark's)

They are responsible for ensuring the safe evacuation of the premises and escorting people to their assembly areas.

Assembly points should be at least 500m away from the incident, car parks should not be used as assembly points, and there should be varying assembly points to cover different scenarios.

The School's assembly point is:

- Regent's Park – at the children's playground by Gloucester Gate

In the case of a letter/package bomb:

- Evacuate the room/floor concerned, and the two floors immediately above and below (if applicable)
- Do not cause panic or disorder, aim to get people out of the building quickly

### **Personal emergency evacuation plans**

We may have staff, pupils and visitors who require personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs). The circumstances of an evacuation due to a bomb threat are considered within the School's Procedures for the Evacuation of People with Disabilities, and staff are briefed on the details.

### **Protected spaces**

If an evacuation route will take people near to the suspect device/package, then it should not be used. If there are no alternative safe routes, then a protected space should be considered. A protected space may, in some cases, be safer to use than evacuating the building, as it should protect against blast and flying fragments.

A safe place consists of:

- Concrete walls (e.g. internal corridors, toilet areas)
- Away from windows, external doors and walls
- Away from the area in between the building's perimeter and the first line of supporting columns (known as the 'perimeter structural bay')
- Away from stairwells or areas with access to lift shafts
- Above the ground and first floor if possible

Safe spaces within the School are:

- St Mary's: landings on first and second floors
- St Luke's: ground floor and first floor corridors
- Gatehouse: upstairs corridor
- St Mark's: upstairs corridor (outside SENCO's office) and ground floor pupil toilets
- EYFS: Nursery quiet area and pupil toilets
- Admin corridor: The Bursar's Office

### **Media and Communication**

Staff must not reveal any details about specific incidents to the media or to anyone through social media, unless advised by the police, as by doing so this may:

- Be the objective of the person making the threat
- Cause unnecessary alarm to others
- Be used by those planning to target other venues

- Adversely affect the subsequent police investigation.

## **Drills**

We carry out termly fire and lockdown drills to ensure that staff and pupils are familiar with the procedures that the School has in place for dealing with emergencies and for evacuation. If any shortcomings are found during these drills they will be investigated and our policies and procedures will be amended where necessary.

## **Linked Policies**

- Crisis Management Policy
- Fire Risk Prevention Policy and Procedures
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Procedures for the Evacuation of People with Disabilities
- Lockdown Procedures
- Prevent Policy

### APPENDIX: Bomb Threat Incident Record

<b>Actions to be taken on receipt of a bomb threat</b>	
Switch on recording/voicemail (if possible)	
Record the exact wording of the threat	
<b>Ask the following questions:</b>	
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?	

<b>Record time call completed:</b>	
Where automatic number reveal equipment is available, record number shown	
Inform the Bursar (or in her absence another member of SLT)	This was reported to _____ Time reported _____
Contact the police on (9)999	Time reported to police _____
<b>The following part should be completed once the caller has hung up and the Bursar/SLT and the police have been informed:</b>	
Time and date of call	
Length of call	
Number at which the call was received (your extension number)	
<b>About the caller</b>	
Male or female?	
Estimate of age (young, middle-aged, old)	
Indication of accent/dialect, ethnicity	
Indication of level of education	
Other vocal characteristics: stutter, nasal sound	
Did the caller seem familiar with the School layout?	
Was there any background noise?	