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# **Emergency Guidelines Docket In Case of a Bomb Threat**

## Emergency Guidelines Docket In Case of emergencies like an attack or a Bomb Threat

### Introduction

Threats to schools are increasing around the world. They can be a terrorist attack, gun attacks or bomb threats. It is important that the adults in the school are trained to handle such emergencies as the way we react in these emergency situations will define how children understand, behave and cope with the emergency- during and after.

Ensuring children in our schools are safe is of prime importance. This Emergency Guidelines Docket is to support school leaders like Principals, Headmistress, teachers and support staff to know what to do in case there is an emergency situation. Having a plan in place helps everyone stay calm, respond quickly, and keep our children safe.

This guide explains step-by-step what should be done and the process to follow during an emergency like a bomb threat. If we all know these steps and practice them regularly, our teams can act fast, stay calm, and keep our children safe.

**As a first step always keep the local police station number and the number of the officer in charge available with you and put it on your office notice board with other emergency numbers like local doctor etc.**

The goal of Bomb Threat Guidelines is to keep our children safe by providing clear instructions on what to do if there's a bomb threat at the school. The objectives are to:

- Keep Everyone Calm
- Act Quickly
- Keep Children Safe
- Help Staff Respond Well
- Practice Regularly
- Communicate Clearly with the Staff and Parents
- Prepare Together
- Create a Safe Environment

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## Bomb or Attack Threats

Bomb threats can be communicated through various means, including phone calls, emails, or social media. **Regardless of the method, all bomb or other threats constitute a criminal offense and should be promptly reported to the police station for further guidance and action.**

### Types of Bomb Threats and Plan Of Action

#### 1. Telephone Bomb Threat:

- ❖ Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. DONOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.
- ❖ Listen carefully. Be polite and show interest.
- ❖ Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
- ❖ If possible, write a note to a colleague to call the Police or, as soon as the caller hangs up, immediately notify them yourself.
- ❖ If your phone has a display, copy the number and/or letters on the window display.
- ❖ Keep the Bomb threat checklist handy always and Complete the Bomb Threat Checklist immediately (format in Annexure 1)
- ❖ Write down as much detail as you can remember. Try to get exact words.

#### 2. Email or social media Bomb Threat and Plan of Action

- ❖ Take a print out of the threat.
- ❖ Send a screenshot immediately to the POLICE, for further action.
- ❖ Do not reply to, forward or delete the message.
- ❖ Note the sender's email address or social media user name/user ID.
- ❖ Preserve all log web files for your school to help in the further investigation

#### 3. Unattended and Suspicious Packages Bomb Threat and Plan of Action

- ❖ Identify potentially dangerous items, such as those left behind unattended. These are usually left in the shrubbery around the school or in the outdoor area. Be vigilant
- ❖ Report immediately to POLICE, do not touch the package, wait for further instructions.

#### 4. Signs of Unattended and Suspicious Packages

- ❖ Signs of a suspicious package:
- ❖ No return address Poorly handwritten
- ❖ Excessive postage Misspelled words
- ❖ Stains Incorrect titles
- ❖ Strange odor Foreign postage
- ❖ Strange sounds Restrictive notes
- ❖ Unexpected delivery

## General Safety Procedures to Adhere

In general, if you suspect a bomb threat, then school teams to keep in mind the following steps:

### 1. Call POLICE for Guidance:

- ❖ If there is a credible bomb threat, prioritize the safety of everyone in the school.
- ❖ Follow the set established evacuation plan and move to a safe distance from the school building.
- ❖ The above to be done only after coordination with the POLICE who will guide based on the bomb threat situation described and present.

### Actions to consider

- ❖ **Evacuation** will be appropriate when directed by the police or it is reasonable to assume that the threat is credible and evacuation will move staff and pupils towards a safer location.
- ❖ **Invacuation** will be appropriate when it is safer to remain inside a classroom or the school (e.g. in the school hall), away from walls and windows.
- ❖ Neither of the above will be reasonable and proportionate if the threat is deemed to be implausible (i.e. a deliberate hoax).

### Do not use any Electronic devices:

- ❖ Avoid using mobile phones or electronic devices near the suspected threat, as they can potentially trigger explosive devices.

### Evacuation Drills:

- ❖ Carry out evacuation drills (like fire drills) at appropriate intervals to ensure staff and children are prepared.

### Unfamiliar Items

- ❖ Adopt a 'if you see it-report it' policy so that unfamiliar items can be quickly identified.

### Approach to Police

- ❖ Approach the Police should be your first priority.

### Press

- ❖ Media and communication – avoid revealing details about incidents without consulting the police as this may play into the threat-maker's hands.

## What to do after the threat...

An emergency like this would definitely have an impact on staff, parents and children.

### For staff-

Talk to your staff and reassure them and commend them on how well they responded during the crisis. Ask them if anyone needs any counselling or support.

### For parents-

Communication will be drafted and sent to you for parents during the crisis and post the crisis a circular will be sent to you for parents .

### For children-

#### Remember Every child will respond differently.

1. **Children are resilient:** they bounce back quickly with structure, support from family, friends, and community. Children may want to stay home again from school the next day because they are afraid. As parents, their gut feeling may also be to keep them home because they, too, are afraid. The **best thing** to do is to send them to school. This will show them that parents trust the school and the school's security protocols. This will allow them to return to a normal routine and distract them from their anxious thoughts that will cause their worries and fears to grow.

2. **Be mindful** of their age, developmental stage, and temperament. This will help to guide you about what information they need to know and what they don't:

- ❖ Younger kids may be OK with “ everything is fine now.”
- ❖ Older kids may see and read higher-level conversations and opinions on social media that will require further dialog.
- ❖ An easy-going child may only need to hear “ Your school was evacuated today because of a bomb threat. It was checked out and it's all clear now, so it will be open tomorrow.”
- ❖ An anxious child may have a lot of questions – “How do they know that there was no bomb? Did they search everywhere? Did they search every *possible* place that a bomb could be? Why would someone do that?”

3. **Social learning:** Remember that our children model their behavior from their parents, so it is important to ask parents to stay calm and stick to normal routines. If children notice worry or sadness from adults, they will feel worried as well; however, if adults stay calm, they will feel safe. If adults change the normal routine, they will notice and wonder why things are changing.

4. **Talk to them:** Take time before responding to questions to think about what is age appropriate—keep information simple and general. Do not provide information that will increase fear. For children who were not present during the evacuation , know that they will hear things, so it is best to talk with them about it ahead of time (again, remember to keep the information age appropriate). For those who were present today, allow them to talk about what happened and let them direct the conversation.

5. **Validate feelings:** Everyone will experience this differently and all emotions are accepted. Listen to your children, allow them to express themselves. It is unhelpful to say “Don't worry” or “It's going to be OK”. Instead, say, “It's OK to feel worried. You went through something that would make many people feel scared.” Or “When I found out, my heart started beating faster, too.”

**6.Reassurance:** While children should be allowed to feel scared, sad, or angry, reassure them that the school is working with local law enforcement and that everyone has their safety in mind. Always keep in mind their age when considering how much to share.

**7.Adjustment:** It is normal to experience these feelings and to re-experience the event in the days and weeks following it. If worries and fears are interfering with school performance, social activities and daily functioning, seek professional help and support from a school counsellor or mental health professional.

## And finally...

- ❖ Ensure your school has an up-to-date Bomb Threat Response Plan which staff know about.
- ❖ Assign relevant roles and responsibilities to support evacuation procedures.
- ❖ Carry out evacuation drills at appropriate intervals to ensure everyone is prepared.
- ❖ Make provision for those staff or pupils with specific needs at times of evacuation.
- ❖ Adopt a 'see it-report it' policy so that unfamiliar items can be quickly identified.
- ❖ Ask relevant staff to conduct safety walkabouts and report causes for concern.
- ❖ Review your school's approach and awareness to safety at agreed intervals.

**Stay alert to stay safe!**

# ANNEXURE 1

Exact Words of Threat
Information About Caller
❖ Where is the caller located ? (background/level of noise)
❖ Estimated age:
❖ Is voice familiar ? If so, who does it sound like ?

## Other points:

Caller's Voice	Background Sounds	Threat Language
Female	Animal noises	Incoherent
Male	House noises	Message read
Accent	Kitchen noises	Taped message
Angry	Street noises	Irrational
Calm	Booth	Profane
Clearing throat	PA system	Well-spoken
Coughing	Conversation	
Cracking Voice	Music	
Crying	Motor	
Deep	Clear	
Deep breathing	Static	
Disguised	Office machinery	
Distinct	Factory machinery	
Excited	Local	
Laughter	Long distance	
Lisp		
Loud		
Nasal		
Normal		
Ragged		
Rapid		
Raspy		
Slow		
Soft		
Stutter		

**Other Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

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