

ST JAMES' RC PRIMARY SCHOOL BOMB THREAT POLICY

This policy has the School's Motto at its heart.

**Faith in action,
Growing together,
Walking in the footsteps of Christ**

Rationale

The vast majority of bomb threats are hoaxes designed to cause alarm and disruption. As well as the rare instances of valid bomb threats, terrorists may also make hoax bomb threat calls to intimidate the public, businesses and communities, to draw attention to their cause and to mislead police. While many bomb threats involve a person-to-person phone call, an increasing number are sent electronically using email or social media applications.

The most likely threat to the school is from someone with a desire to disrupt the running of the school rather than from a terrorist organisation wishing to cause an outrage by exploding a bomb on the premises. **Unfortunately this cannot be assumed and all threats, however outlandish they may appear, must and will be taken seriously.** Any warning St James' RC Primary receives about such a threat is treated seriously, with the safety of the pupils and staff paramount. No matter how ridiculous or implausible the threat may seem, all such communications are a crime and should be reported to the police by dialling 999.

When contacting the Police tell them:

- Who you are and your job title
- Where you are calling from and the phone number
- Why you are calling

The school has in place a set of procedures for dealing with threats.

Staff should be vigilant at all times and report anything suspicious, for instance suspect packages, unrecognised vehicles in the car park or persons in unauthorised areas.

If you receive a telephone threat you should:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- If practical, keep the caller talking and alert a colleague to dial 999
- Alert the Head teacher who will follow the '**Immediate Actions**' document below
- Use the '**Actions to be Taken on Receipt of a Bomb Threat**' checklist (attached)
- Note if the caller uses a code word as this will alert the Police as to whether it is a genuine code word or a hoax
- If displayed on your phone, note the number of the caller, otherwise, dial 1471 to obtain the number once the call has ended
- If the threat is a recorded message write down as much detail as possible

If the threat is delivered face-to-face:

- Try to remember as many distinguishing characteristics of the threat-maker as possible

If the threat is discovered in a written note, letter or as graffiti:

- Treat as police evidence and stop other people touching the item

If the threat is received via text, email or social media application:

- Do not reply to, forward or delete the message
- Note the sender's email address or username/user ID for social media applications
- Preserve all web log files for your organisation to help the police investigation

Suspicious Packages

Refer to '**Aids to Detection**' checklist below.

If staff are suspicious they should NOT TOUCH OR HANDLE THE PACKAGE IN ANY WAY.

Staff should not hesitate to carry out the '**Immediate Actions**' document below.

If it has been inadvertently picked up, the package should be placed gently onto a firm surface where it can be clearly seen and people should LEAVE THE ROOM IMMEDIATELY.

Evacuate the immediate area, raise the alarm and call the emergency services.

When talking to emergency services explain:

- Where the package is and why you are suspicious of it.
- Package size, appearance, smell, greasy marks, and visible features such as wires, postmark and who it is addressed to.
- Is recipient a likely target?
- When the package was found and was any warning given?
- Who found it?
- What precautions are being taken?

Vehicle bombs

It is highly unlikely that a vehicle bomb would be used against a target such as St James' RC Primary School, but in such an event the Police should be notified immediately. Details required by the Police will include the registration number and description of the vehicle.

Communication and the Media

Avoid revealing details about specific incidents to the media or through social media without prior consultation with police. Do not provide details of the threat, the decision making process relating to evacuation or why a decision not to evacuate was taken.

Releasing details of the circumstances may:

- be an objective of the hoaxer and provide them with a perceived credibility
- cause unnecessary alarm to others
- be used by those planning to target other venues
- elicit copycat incidents
- adversely affect the subsequent police investigation

Immediate Actions in school hours

The following actions will be taken in the event of a threat occurring during the school day:

1. Evacuate the School using the fire evacuation procedure. Any evacuation route should avoid passing the location of any suspect package. As soon as the roll call is complete at the Assembly Point the Head teacher and emergency services will decide if a full site evacuation is necessary. Full site evacuation will take place through the gates at the back of the building and will be to **Southborough Primary School or St James the Great Church**.
2. Ensure that **no** packages and bags are removed during the evacuation **unless** staff are **positive** that the item has been in their **personal possession** since leaving home that morning.
3. Call the Police by dialling 999. Give as many details as possible.
4. Under no circumstances are children or staff to re-enter the school once everyone has been accounted for and must wait until the Police confirm that it is safe to do so.

Immediate Actions out of school hours

If a key holder is made aware of a bomb threat then they must inform the Police immediately. Equally, if the Police are made aware of a possible threat to the school, they will inform one of the key holders. Under no circumstances should a key holder or staff member carry out a search.

Aids to Detection

A list of pointers to look for in determining whether a package or letter is suspect include:

Excessive Wrapping: The bomber will want to ensure that the device arrives at its intended destination intact and undamaged. Excessive sticky tape, string and padding may be used to achieve this.

Gummed Flap Completely Stuck Down: To ensure that the package does not open accidentally in transit, the gummed flap on the envelope, usually only partially stuck down, may be completely stuck down so that there is no un-gummed gap at the sides.

Stiffness: A letter device requires a solid (i.e. stiff) base on which to mount the components (i.e. battery, detonator, circuitry etc.) Note: items must not be rattled or flexed if thought suspicious.

A Second Envelope: Attempts to bypass the screening system may be made by the use of a second envelope, which is tightly taped or tied with string, and addressed personally to the intended victim.

Heavy/Lopsided: The components of devices (e.g. batteries, explosive) are often quite unexpectedly heavy. They can be unevenly distributed which can make the package lopsided.

Un-typed Address: It is unusual for envelopes or packages containing official or business mail to be un-typed, particularly if block capitals are used.

Foreign Style or Layout: Some foreigners write with a distinctive style, particularly if their native language, such as Arabic, does not use the Roman alphabet. In some countries it is the practice to write addresses in a different order – e.g. the name of the town is put above the street name and the number of the house or flat appears at the end of the line.

“Letraset” or “Unistencil” People who cannot type or do not have access to a typewriter and wish to conceal their identity sometimes use these.

Excessive Postage: A bomber will want to ensure that a device sent by post will not be held up by the Royal Mail or, worse still, rejected by the recipient because insufficient postage has been used. Therefore, to avoid going to a Post Office to obtain the correct postage (an action which might subsequently result in his being identified), he may use an excessive amount of postage. Extravagance of this sort is unusual with Government Departments and commercial organisations.

Errors in Address: Bombers often do not have accurate details of the names, titles, appointments, honours and addresses of their targets. Bad spelling is also common.

Unusual Postmark: Devices are often sent from foreign countries and places in the UK, which fall outside the areas from which mail is normally received.

Franking and Stamp Incompatible: Sometimes packages with stamps from other parts of the UK or even foreign countries are posted in England and therefore bear franking which does not correspond to the stamp's place of origin.

Protruding Wire or Tinfoil: It is possible that a piece of protruding electric wire or tinfoil from an Improvised Explosive Device will have pierced the wrapping in transit and is visible.

Grease Marks: If not properly wrapped in a greaseproof wrapping, some types of explosive exude a liquid or vapour, which can appear as a grease mark on the outside of the package.

Pinhole in the Wrapping: Some devices are armed after the package has been sealed. This can leave a small hole in the wrapping through which the arming wire has been pulled.

Strange Odour: Some explosives give off an unusual odour, which can often be smelt by sniffing the outer wrapping of the package. Some explosives smell like almonds or marzipan

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance.

It will be reviewed every three years.

It was last reviewed in: March 2018

It will next be reviewed in: March 2021

This statement of policy was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on:-

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)

_____ (Head teacher)