

St John's Church of England School

'I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength'
Philippians 4:13



Bomb Threat Policy

Reviewed: October 2023

To be reviewed: October 2026

School Vision

Vision

‘.....I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength’. Phil 4:13.

At St John’s we foster an ethos is deeply rooted in the Bible, underpinned by **faith** and committed to educational excellence. In our community we respect that everyone is uniquely made in the image of God. We grow together in **wisdom, compassion, strength** and instil a sense of **hope** for all to flourish.

‘We make a difference’

Core Values

Faith – Is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see

Strength – God presents us with the strength to build and progress in our life and the lives of others.

Compassion – We are fair, we care and show understanding towards others.

Wisdom – Building confidence, discipline and knowledge to fully develop our talents in all areas of our lives.

Hope – Coping wisely with situations that will help guide us into fulfilling our aspirations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Recent events have shown that such threats can easily arise from both terrorists and those with simple malicious intent. To counter this threat the school has in place a set of procedures for dealing with such threats.

The current UK threat level is 'Substantial' (an attack is likely). However, we should be **alert but not alarmed**. The negative publicity surrounding an attack on a school will dissuade most terror groups. Those that frequently target schools do so to largely create revenue through ransom demands to finance and further their cause and are not well supported in the UK.

- 1.2 All employees have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm. They are also expected to co-operate fully in complying with any procedures that may be introduced as a measure to protect the safety and wellbeing of staff and visitors.

2. The threat:

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.

3. Sources of Threat

3.1 Telephone calls

The most common form of notification of a bomb is that of a telephone call from the organisation concerned. If the School receives such a call, then the Immediate Actions listed below should be carried out. **See appendix 2**

3.2 Packages

Causes for concern could be packages delivered to the School. See Appendix 1 for Aids to Detection. Equally unidentified packages left on the premises may give cause for concern. In all cases staff should not hesitate to question why the package is there and should equally not hesitate to carry out the Immediate Actions if their concerns are not IMMEDIATELY allayed.

3.3 Vehicle bombs

It is highly unlikely that a car or other vehicle bomb would be used against a target such as St John's 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.

4. Immediate Actions in School Hours

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

- 4.1 It is likely that the office will receive the initial telephone call however if a message is received elsewhere in the school, contact the office who will call the Police by dialling 9-999. Give as many details as possible, using Bomb Threat Procedure **Appendix 3**.
- 4.2. Evacuate the School using the fire evacuation procedure. Any evacuation route should avoid passing the location of the suspect package. As soon as the register call is complete, move the children from Lower School to either the top of the field or the bottom depending on the location of the suspect package. Move the Upper School children to the field, again depending on the location of the package. You will be notified of the muster point by a member of the SLT.
- 4.3 If the roll call is incomplete, await the arrival of the police and inform them of any missing children, staff or visitors. Ensure all information regarding the last location of anyone missing is provided to the police as soon as they arrive.
- 4.4 Ensure that no packages, bags or other possible bombs are removed during the evacuation unless staff are positive that the item has been in their personal possession since leaving home that morning. No items should be removed from school except the 'evacuation trolleys'
- 4.5 Under no circumstances are children or staff to re-enter the school once everyone has been accounted for until the Police confirm that it is safe to do so.

5. Immediate Actions Out of School Hours

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Under no circumstances should a key holder or staff member carry out a search.
- 5.3 The Headteacher should be informed as soon as reasonably possible.

Appendix 1 – Aids to Detection

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

a) 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.

b) 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.

c) 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.

d) 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.

e) 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.

f) 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.

g) 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.

h) “Letraset” or “Unistencil”

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

i) 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), they may use an excessive amount of postage. Extravagance of this sort is unusual with Government Departments and commercial organisations.

j) 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.

k) 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.

l) 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.

m) 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.

n) 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.

o) 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.

p) 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.

Appendix 2

Bomb threat Procedure

Although bomb threats usually turn out to be hoaxes, they must always be taken seriously. It is important that office staff receiving the call know what questions to ask the caller so they may pass on as much information as possible to the Police.

Possible actions/ prompt card

Action	Tick
1. Stay calm	
2. Let them finish the message without interruption. Try to record <u>exactly</u> what they say, especially any codeword they might give. <u>Message:</u>	
3. Make a note of: • The exact time of the call: • The callers sex and approximate age: • Any accent the person has, or any distinguishing feature about their voice (eg speech impediment, state of drunkenness) • Any distinguishable background noise	
4. When they have finished the message, try to ask as many of the following questions as you can, being cautious to avoid provoking the caller: • Where is the bomb? • What time is it due to go off? • What does it look like? • What will cause it to explode? • Why are you doing this? • What is your name? • What is your address? • What is your telephone number?	
5. Dial 1471 – you may get the details of where the phone call was made from, <u>especially</u> in the case of a hoax caller	
6. Report the call to the police and the headteacher/nominated deputy immediately. In the extremely unlikely event that there was a codeword with the message, and the location of the bomb was given as a location other	

than the school, follow the same procedure – report the call immediately to the police, and then notify the headteacher.	
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Appendix 3

1. Telephone Calls

Start the evacuation during the call if there is another person present to do this. Remember sounding the alarm will hinder the ability to hear the caller.

The receptionist (or whoever answers the phone) should complete the Telephone Checklist, Appendix 3 as soon as possible after receiving the call. Copies of the check-list should be kept near the telephone and staff trained in the requirement to complete the document, so if the worst happens, the form can be used as a reference point during the call. Make sure any code words are noted as these can give the emergency services vital leads as to who has made the call and possibly planted a device.

Think about the call:

Name of person taking the call:

Date and time of Call:

- Did the caller use a codeword – the Police have access to the current list and can verify if it is a genuine codeword or a hoax
- Duration of call
- Content of the call – location of bomb, time of detonation
- Was the caller male or female
- Did they have a pronounced accent
- Possible Nationality
- Estimated age
- Tone of voice (scared, excited, aggressive, upset):
- Background noises (cars, people, giggling, music, machinery)

Reason for the call

Time permitting, try 1471 and see what number is returned!

2. Packages and Vehicles

If you are suspicious – **DO NOT TOUCH OR HANDLE THE PACKAGE IN ANY WAY.**

Unfortunately, it is often the touch or feel of the package that gives rise to suspicion. If you have inadvertently picked up the package, place it gently onto a firm surface where it can be clearly seen by Bomb Disposal Officers and **LEAVE THE ROOM IMMEDIATELY.**

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
 - Telephone threat
 - Give all the information you have gleaned from the call
 - Packages & vehicles
 - Where the package is (details of location) and why you are suspicious of it
 - Package size/bulk, appearance, smell and greasy marks, visible features (wires etc), address to?, postmark
 - Is recipient a likely target
 - What time was the package found, and was any warning given
 - Who found it
 - What precautions are being taken
3. Remember where the package is because the Police will want to examine the package, even if only from a distance! When moving the children into the safe areas, try to minimise exposure by moving along a route, which does not go past the package.
4. Any bomb involving a vehicle would cause a huge explosion and the only safe distance from such a device is the maximum that can be obtained. The police will request the following cordon distances: Small device 100m, Medium device 200m, and a large device 400m. If a decision is made to evacuate then St Johns Church is the designated primary RVP. Move the children to St Johns Church using the school exit furthest from the package or car. If the suspect car is in front of the

upper school then the children should leave by the lower school gate and similarly if it is outside the lower school the children should use the upper school exit. If the device is suspected to be of a chemical threat, then be aware of prevailing wind and evacuate accordingly as above.

In the event of an evacuation contact:

Revd Matthew Stone, Rector St John's Church Stanmore

Phone 020 8954 3876 – Mobile 07950 891883

PA to Revd Stone – Ms Karen Stirrup: 020 8954 7064