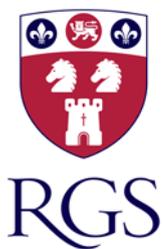




# **BOMB THREATS AND SUSPECT PACKAGES**



RGS



# BOMB THREATS AND SUSPECT PACKAGES POLICY

Newcastle upon Tyne Royal Grammar School

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## Introduction

It is highly improbable that any terrorist behaviour or the planting of explosive or incendiary devices or the sending of contaminated packages will normally be directed against schools, school children or personnel at schools. It is more likely that hoax threats of such activity could be sent to schools out of spite, misguided revenge or a perverted sense of fun and mischief. However, any threat received should be treated with the utmost seriousness.

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## Bomb Threats

On receipt of information, which is usually by telephone, but could be via email or social media, that such a device has been or will be 'planted', it is important that as much detail about the call is recorded at the time. A proforma for use when taking calls of this nature is attached. This information should be passed to the Headmaster, Bursar or a member of the SLT. The police must be informed by a member of the SLT of all cases of threats of this nature as soon as possible.

If the threat is delivered face-to-face, try to remember as many distinguishing characteristics of the threat-maker as possible.

If 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 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 (as a guide, 7 days prior to the threat message and 48 hours after)

The Headmaster, or in his absence the Bursar, will consider the advice from the police and make a decision to either:

- Close the building if the school day has not started;
- evacuate the building;

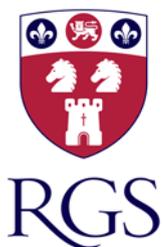
or

- to disregard the information.

The SLT should also be informed.

This decision will obviously be determined in part by the circumstances of the information:

- the communication itself
- age of the instigator, words used, attitude, etc.



- previous history of relevant threats locally and nationally
- reasons for believing that the threat is genuine by virtue of some political or extremist or serious local conditions which are likely to provoke some violent activity.
- the problems which could accompany evacuation, especially of children.

Once a decision has been made the action must be speedy. If the decision is evacuation, this must be total with no exceptions. The fire alarm signal is used and the drill is the same as that for a fire. A roll call should be taken. The Bursar should be informed in all circumstances.

A search of the building after a suitable time has elapsed and before re-occupation is recommended – say 30 to 40 minutes but not before the police have arrived. With agreement of the police, the search must be methodical and carefully supervised by the senior person present. The search should be undertaken by Fire Marshals and Caretakers following guidance from the senior person present. Special attention should be paid in, around and beneath motor vehicles. Police do not undertake to assist in any search as they are unfamiliar with the geography and normal contents of buildings.

Any suspicious objects or packages must not be interfered with. The police must be advised and they will initiate any appropriate action.

The Bursar following advice from the Emergency Services will declare when it is safe to re-enter the buildings.

When children, teachers and other staff return to the premises they should be encouraged to report to the Bursar or other member of the SLT, but not touch, any unusual objects such as packages, etc.

All hoax calls, threats or suspicions of any kind must be reported to Headmaster who will contact the Chair of Governors as soon as possible.

If no evacuation has taken place, the senior person and others in positions of responsibility, e.g. the Facilities Manager, Caretakers etc., should examine likely places such as entrances, cloakrooms, toilets, boiler house and the perimeter of the buildings.

Explosive devices are sometimes sent by post and the steps outlined below for suspect packages should be followed.

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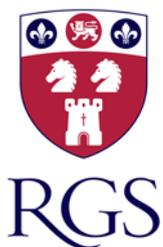
### **Suspect Packages**

Terrorist or criminal incidents of this nature are extremely rare. However, if there is a concern that a suspect explosive or biological/chemical package has been received, sensible steps can be taken to minimise the risk of exposure and the possibility of harm. The overall message is to remain calm.

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### **General Mail Handling – What to Look For**

- Open all mail with a letter opener or other method that is least likely to disturb the contents
- Open packages/envelopes with a minimum amount of movement
- Do not blow into envelopes
- Do not shake or pour out contents



- Keep hands away from nose and mouth while opening mail
- Wash hands after handling mail.
- Explosive devices are usually designed to detonate on opening.

If Colleagues are in any doubt about a package, do not touch it move it or open it; instead call the Bursar or member of the SLT. They will consider the situation and decide whether to call the police and emergency services.

Some items that can trigger suspicion include:

- 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 oddly-shaped envelope
- Postmark that does not match return address
- Restrictive endorsements such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- Excessive postage
- Handwritten, block-printed or poorly-typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- No return address
- Items addressed to individuals that are no longer with the organisation

Some useful reassuring identification can often be obtained from the postmark, the label indicating origin of the particular addressee. It is well to remember that postal packets have received rough treatment in the course of transmission.

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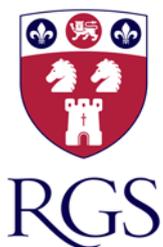
### **General Mail Handling – What to do**

If colleagues believe they have received a contaminated package:

- Do not touch the package further or move it to another location
- 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
- Notify the Bursar or a member of the SLT

The Bursar or a member of the SLT should:

- Notify the police immediately using the 999 system



- Switch off the building air conditioning system
- Close all fire doors in the building
- Close all windows in the rest of the building

If there has been a suspected biological contamination, ensure that personnel outside the room are evacuated as soon as possible and ensure individuals in the contaminated room are evacuated to an adjacent unoccupied room away from the hazard.

If there has been a suspected chemical incident, ensure personnel leave the room as quickly as possible. Possible signs that people have been exposed will be streaming eyes, coughs and irritated skin. Seek immediate medical advice.

If a colleague should find a suspect package outside a building that might be considered dangerous:

- Do not touch it or move it
- Inform the Bursar or a member of the SLT clearly stating why you believe a biological/chemical material is involved.

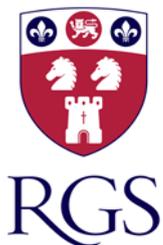
The Bursar or a member of the SLT should:

- Notify the police immediately using the 999 system
- Switch off the building air conditioning system
- Close all fire doors in the building
- Close all windows in the building
- Move people away from the hazard and await instructions from the emergency services

If anyone believes that they have been exposed to biological/chemical material, they should:

- Remain calm
- Do not touch eyes, nose or any other part of the body
- Wash hands in ordinary soap where facilities are provided, but staff movement outside contained locations should be avoided as much as possible
- Notify the Bursar or a member of the SLT
- Keep all persons exposed to the material separate from others and available for medical attention
- Other people should assemble at a safe distance from the incident and continue to be guided by the police and the other emergency services.

It is possible that the Bursar or members of the SLT will not be on site at the time of the incident. If they are not contactable then the most senior nominated member of staff should be contacted instead.



## Other Sources of information and guidance

### Guidance on receipt of a bomb threat

<http://www.cpni.gov.uk/security-planning/business-continuity-plan/bomb-threats/>

Procedures for handling bomb threats - GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats>

### Security guidance for educational establishments

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-protective-security-advice-for-higher-and-further-education>

### Search planning guidance

<http://www.cpni.gov.uk/Security-Planning/Business-continuity-plan/Search-premises/>

### STAY SAFE Guidance for firearms and weapons attacks:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-the-terrorist-threat/recognising-the-terrorist-threat>

### Stay safe film

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>

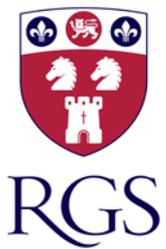
### Dynamic lockdown guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-dynamic-lockdown-procedures>

### Staff Awareness and Security Culture:

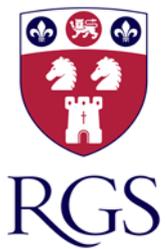
Employee vigilance: <http://www.cpni.gov.uk/advice/Personnel-security1/Employee-vigilance/>

Mail handling: <http://www.cpni.gov.uk/advice/Physical-security/Screening/Mail-and-deliveries/>



This policy should read in conjunction with the following related policies and procedures: -

- Campus Closure
- Emergency Procedures
- Fire Evacuation Procedures



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