



Autumn 2024

CSW Resilience Team Termly School Newsletter

The CSW Resilience Team comprises of Emergency Planning Officers that represent the local authorities of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire. We enable compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act through risk assessments, business continuity, training and exercising, recovery and supporting the planning and response to incidents.

This term the focus of the newsletter is bomb threats. You may be aware that in the news recently, including within the sub-region, there have been multiple bomb threats involving schools. Most bomb **threats** are hoaxes designed to cause alarm and disruption. However of course these hoaxes still need to be treated as bomb threats. Bomb threats / hoaxes were typically received by the phone, but they are more commonly started to be received by email. There is some specific guidance from the DfE about how to manage that threat if you are the person receiving the information – for a call there are many things to consider. For an email it is a little harder. Sometimes the threat won't be verbally shared, instead it could be that there is a suspicious package- again these can be hoaxes where they are placed (with real threat or to impersonate a real threat) to intimidate the public, businesses and communities, to draw attention to their cause and to mislead Police.

To be prepared for a Bomb Threat your school might want to consider

- **Signals** – For bomb threat (different to a fire alarm or general evacuation alarm) and a signal for stand down / all clear. This could be a Public Address Announcement.
- **Incident Control Officer & Response Team** – Identified incident control officer, deputies and communication officers
- **Identify assembly points** – including onsite and offsite (for example a partner school / college / leisure centre which has been preidentified to support).

The Department for Education has recently (April 2024) released non-statutory guidance which provides advice to help educational settings to become better prepared for and able to respond to terrorism and other major incidents. The guidance is aimed at those working in settings who have existing responsibilities for emergency planning and response and site security and staff new to concepts of protective security and preparedness. There is a specific section on bomb threats.

[Protective security and preparedness for the education sector \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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.

What to do if you receive a Bomb Threat on the telephone:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
 - Try to attract the attention of a colleague who should immediately dial 999 (for example pass a note or send a message)
 - Hold the caller on the line for as long as possible. Get as much information as you can and provide this to the police.
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When is the bomb set to go off?• Where has it been planted?• What does it look like? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did the caller sound intoxicated?• Was there any indication of the callers' mental state – did they sound excited, disturbed, incoherent etc |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What kind of bomb is it?• What will cause it to explode?• Was the caller a man or a woman? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was there any accent• Was there any indication of the type of telephone being used – for example a public call box? |



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- Was a code word given?
- What was the exact wording of the threat?
- Did the message sound as though it was being read from a prepared text or was it a taped message?
- Was there any significant background noise - e.g. house noises, street noises, music?
- If displayed on your phone, note the number of the caller, otherwise, dial 1471 to get the number once the call has ended

Suspicious Packages

If your school receives a suspicious package, it is very important to not move the item. Do not cover or encase it in any way. It is also important to be aware of any secondary devices.

IF YOU THINK A PACKAGE, ITEM OR ENVELOPE IS SUSPICIOUS, DIAL 999 – ASK FOR POLICE.

Indicators of a Suspicious Item – THINK H.O.T

H HIDDEN?
Has it been concealed or hidden from view?

O OBVIOUSLY SUSPICIOUS?
Does it have any wires, circuit boards, batteries, tape or putty like substance?

T TYPICAL?
Is this item typical of what you would expect to find in the location?

Once the item has been deemed suspicious do not touch it and follow the actions below:

- CONFIRM** - That the item is suspicious
- CLEAR** - The area working outwards from the device
- CORDON** - Off the required distances
- CONTROL** - The incident
- CHECK** - All the above has been completed

Information that will be required when calling the police:

- WHAT** - is it?
- WHERE** - is it? (what3words is useful for the emergency services a specific location)
- WHY** - is it suspicious?
- WHEN** - was it found, placed or reported?
- WHO** - found it, who is the potential target or perpetrator?

Know what to do if you find a suspicious item

- Do not touch it
- Try and identify an owner in the immediate area
- Check whether the item has suspicious characteristic
- If you still think it's suspicious (or in any doubt)
- Clear the immediate area and adjacent areas (look for possible secondary devices)
- Dial 999 ask for the police
- Follow police advice and provide as much information about the item as possible (see indicators above)
- Prevent others from entering these areas
- If safe to do so check CCTV



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Indicators of a Suspicious Package

- Unexpected item, especially if hand delivered
- Additional inner envelope or other contents that may be difficult to remove
- Labelling or excessive sealing that encourages opening at a particular end or in a particular way
- Oddly shaped or lopsided
- Unexpected or unusual origin (postmark and/or return address)
- Poorly or inaccurately addressed address printed unevenly or unusually
- Unfamiliar writing or unusual style
- Unusual postmark or no postmark
- More stamps than needed for size or weight of package
- Greasy or oily stains emanating from the package
- Odours, liquid or powder emanating from the package

I hope the contents of this terms newsletter has been useful.

I hope you all have a very safe start to the school term. Please consider updating your emergency management plans to align with the content included within this newsletter and ensure any staff changes have been reflected in the emergency management plan.

If you need any support with your emergency management arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

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