

**NLSchools** refers to all public K-12 English schools and school related facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees working therein providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in the areas of school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

## Policy Name

Bomb Threats

## Policy Statement

The Department of Education treats all bomb threats as very serious and will take every precaution to ensure the safety of all building occupants. NLSchools will establish procedures to provide for a safe, appropriate, and consistent approach to dealing with bomb threats throughout its schools and other properties.

## Background

NLSchools is committed to providing a safe, caring, and healthy school environment. This policy is aligned with the **Safe and Caring Schools Policy**. NLSchools believes that the safety of students and staff is paramount in the event of a bomb threat. Bomb threats can be extremely disruptive to the school day and very unsettling for students and staff. Schools are expected to follow an established process for responding to bomb threats, and to work with local emergency response authorities to resolve the situation.

## Scope

This policy applies to all students, employees, visitors, schools, and school related facilities within NLSchools.

## Definitions

### Local Emergency Response Authorities

Local Emergency Response Authorities include local police (**Royal Newfoundland Constabulary** or **Royal Canadian Mounted Police**), fire department and health/emergency authorities and/or other designated community members.

### Bomb Threat

A bomb threat can be received in a number of ways that include in written format (a paper note or a message on a wall), through phone calls, or through various other

technological means (email, text message, social media avenues).

### **Policy Directives**

1. All schools must prepare a response plan in the event of a bomb threat, consistent with the Administrative Procedures associated with this policy.
2. The school administration and all staff are expected to respond to all bomb threats in a prudent and expeditious manner. Local emergency response authorities must be notified as soon as possible.
3. All bomb threats must be reported to the Superintendent of Schools at the earliest possible opportunity.
4. In the event a school receives a bomb threat, the school administrator must inform parents and guardians in a timely manner of the threat and the action taken.
5. The school administrator must ensure that all pertinent information related to the bomb threat is recorded and filed for future reference.
6. Where it is determined that a student made a bomb threat, they will be subject to discipline up to and including suspension. This will be separate from any criminal charges, convictions or penalties imposed.

### **Administrative Procedures**

#### **1. School Response Plan**

The following actions will take place at the school level in preparation for dealing with a bomb threat:

- 1.1 At the beginning of the school year, the school administrator shall make arrangements for a designated alternate site, in the event that the occupants of the school building have to be evacuated due to a bomb threat.
  - a) The preferred alternate site shall provide for shelter from weather, be large enough to accommodate the regular student enrolment and staff members and be at least 100 metres from the school building.
- 1.2 The school administrator shall ensure that staff have access to each student's personal contact information at all alternate sites.
- 1.3 The school administrator, in consultation with staff, shall decide upon a pre-determined signal to discretely inform staff that a bomb threat has been received, and shall plan for the following evacuation options. A specific code will

be associated with each option so that staff are aware of the plan that they will need to initiate once the code has been communicated:

- a) A complete evacuation of the premises.
- b) A partial evacuation of the premises.

1.4 The school administrator shall inform staff of any specific responsibilities in the event of an evacuation.

1.5 Early in the school year, school administrators must ensure that all staff are familiar with the **Bomb Threat Record Form**. Copies of the **Bomb Threat Record Form** should be able to be easily accessed in an emergency situation.

1.6 The school administrator shall establish a plan for communicating with parents and guardians once a bomb threat has been assessed and addressed.

## 2. Receipt of Threat – Risk Assessment

2.1 Factors to be considered in assessing the potential risk when a bomb threat is received by a school include, but are not limited to:

- a) Whether it is a specific or non-specific warning.
- b) The prevalence of bomb threats in the school community and surrounding schools within a recent timeframe, and the publicity these incidents received.
- c) Whether the threat may be linked to any recent incident (e.g. discipline of students) at the school.

## 3. Responding to a Bomb Threat

3.1 When a bomb threat is received, school personnel shall follow the procedures below:

- a) The staff person who receives or becomes aware of the threat must:
  - i. Immediately inform the school administrator and not discuss it with anyone else.
  - ii. Make a written record of the information received as soon as possible, using the **Bomb Threat Record Form**. The form must be submitted to the school administrator at the earliest opportunity.
- b) The school administrator will:

- i. Decide if an evacuation is necessary and if so, immediately evacuate the school as per the school's emergency evacuation plan.
- ii. Notify the local emergency response authorities.

### 3.2 Threats Received by Phone

- a) The person answering the phone should listen carefully and note as much information as possible regarding the bomb threat.
- b) Record the phone number if available through call display, or use \*57 telephone procedure to initiate a telephone trace call, if applicable in your geographic area.

### 3.3 Threats Received in a Note

- a) The person who receives the note should minimize contact with the note and all other physical evidence, in order to preserve its characteristics (i.e. fingerprints).
- b) All evidence, including any notes, must be placed in a protective wrapping such as a plastic bag and be immediately given to the school administrator, who will give the note to the local emergency response authorities. Any handling of the evidence should be clearly documented and reported to the local emergency response authorities.

### 3.4 Threats Received by email

- a) The person receiving the email shall **save** and **print** the message immediately. The message should not be deleted.

## 4. Emergency Evacuation

- 4.1 In the event that a partial or full building evacuation is necessary, the school administrator shall ensure the safe, orderly and calm evacuation of students and staff.
- 4.2 Teachers and other staff shall lead students safely out of the building while conducting a preliminary search and visual scan of their classrooms and instructional areas. Anything unusual should be immediately reported to the school administrator and/or emergency response authorities.
- 4.3 Students and staff should rendezvous at the designated alternate site as specified in the school's evacuation plan. The school administrator shall implement a roll call procedure to ensure that the whereabouts of all students and staff are known and verified as soon as possible after arrival at the alternate site.

- 4.4 Local emergency response authorities may conduct a search of the school building as deemed necessary.
- 4.5 Teachers shall advise the school administrator of any students known to be absent from class around the time that the bomb threat was received. This includes any students who went to the washroom or left the instructional area for any reason.
- 4.6 After consulting with local emergency response authorities and the relevant Director of Schools, the school administrator shall determine whether or not staff and students may return to the building or if students will be dismissed.
  - a) The school administrator will need to alert bus contractor(s)/driver(s) that students may be sent home early.

## 5. Communications

- 5.1 As per the planned method of communications, the school administrator shall inform parents and guardians of the bomb threat, the action the school has taken and the outcome of the investigation.
- 5.2 The Superintendent of Schools must be notified of a bomb threat at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.3 Bomb threats are normally considered criminal offences. School personnel should not discuss bomb threats with members of the public. Any inquiries by the media regarding a bomb threat should be directed to the Director of School Communications.

### Bomb Threat Record Form

Date of Threat: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM

**EXACT WORDING OF THREAT:**

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**PHONE CALL (MAKE NOTE OF ALL CALL-RELATED DETAILS)**

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ Obtained through:  Call Display  \*57

Gender of Caller:  M  F  Unknown Estimated age: \_\_\_\_\_

Accent (e.g. English, French) \_\_\_\_\_ Voice (loud, soft) \_\_\_\_\_

Speech (fast, slow) \_\_\_\_\_ Diction (good, nasal, lisp) \_\_\_\_\_

Manner (calm, emotional, vulgar) \_\_\_\_\_ Familiar voice? (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Call received by: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Please Print) Position**

**NOTE**

Where exactly was the note found? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of note?  PAPER  MESSAGE ON WALL  OTHER Note attached:  YES  NO

Other details: \_\_\_\_\_

Note received by: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Please Print) Position**

**EMAIL**

Email address which received threat: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you identify who sent the email? \_\_\_\_\_

Email saved:  YES  NO Email attached:  YES  NO

Email received by: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Please Print) Position**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**