



Threat to School Safety: Bomb Threat

#400.23

Adopted:	September 23, 2025
Last Reviewed/Revised:	New
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	September 2029

PURPOSE:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board ("the Board") recognizes the importance of emergency planning and its responsibility to provide immediate care and assistance to students and staff during emergency situations, to mitigate the impact of the emergency, control the situation and resume normal operations as soon as possible. The purpose of this administrative procedure is to establish consistency across the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board regarding school response when a Bomb Threat is received.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

The Board is committed to enacting a measured response to emergencies with the foremost commitment to preserving the life and the safety of all staff, students and volunteers, as well as protecting property, and restoring operations as quickly as possible. This administrative procedure applies to all Board staff and sets out their obligation to support the implementation of a Bomb Threat Response. Implementation of the Bomb Threat Response Plan must adhere with the School Board Police Protocol.

REFERENCES:

- Education Act
- Board Policy Emergency Preparedness and Response OPS 400.04
- Board Emergency Response Manual
- School Emergency Response Manual
- School Board Police Protocol

FORMS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A

DEFINITIONS:

Bomb Threat Response: is a coordinated set of emergency protocols designed to protect the safety of students, staff, and visitors in the event of a Bomb Threat. This includes assessing the credibility of the threat, securing the premises, communicating with emergency services, and potentially evacuating or locking down the facility.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1.0 Responsibilities

All school staff shall follow this administrative procedure adhering to the specific directions for principals, teachers and support staff and to the School Board Police Protocol.

- 1.1 **Police** - are responsible for supporting schools in terms of the safety of students and staff.
- 1.2 **Principal/Supervisor** - is the direct resources for the police and is responsible for the overall safety of staff and students and for ensuring that all staff and students are aware of the procedures involved in a Bomb Threat response. The principal is also responsible for inviting police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) to participate in plan development and for making them aware of planning and drills; for the training of staff and students; and for the overall safety of staff and students.
- 1.3 **Staff** - are responsible for the safety and well-being of students and assisting in a visual search of the building. Each school plan will include the search of occupied and unoccupied areas.
- 1.4 **Students** - have a responsibility to be familiar with the plan and to respond quickly to the direction of staff during a Bomb Threat or explosives incident. Any student with information on or prior knowledge of anyone or anything that may be associated with or result in a Bomb Threat, the placement of a suspicious package/device, or an explosives incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible.
- 1.5 **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** - will provide urgent medical care in the event of an incident.
- 1.6 **Fire Department** - can assist during Bomb Threat incidents in the event that fire suppression operations are needed and will provide fire suppression and rescue operations in explosives incidents.
- 1.7 **Parents/Guardians** - are responsible for reinforcing their children's responsibility to follow directions during a crisis situation at school.

2.0 Mandatory Requirements

- 2.1 All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a Bomb Threat Response Policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school plans.
- 2.2 Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other partners are aware of their obligations/responsibilities within the individual school plans.

3.0 School Plans

- 3.1 In developing their plans, schools should:
 - 3.1.1 determine likely locations in and around the school for the placement of suspicious packages/devices;
 - 3.1.2 provide controlled access to critical areas of all facilities (e.g., the main office, electrical rooms, mechanical rooms);
 - 3.1.3 consider the possibility of a Bomb Threat when implementing the use of electronic surveillance;
 - 3.1.4 address ways to ensure that emergency exits are kept clear from obstruction;
 - 3.1.5 provide for the regular inspection of first aid and emergency equipment;
 - 3.1.6 assess whether interior/exterior and auxiliary lighting is adequate; and,
 - 3.1.7 develop a reception/inspection procedure for all incoming packages.

4.0 Responding to a Bomb Threat

- 4.1 The principal will gather and refer to the Emergency Measures Supply Kit.
- 4.2 The principal will include in their plan any activities taking place in the school at the time of the threat (e.g., examinations).
- 4.3 Bomb Threats are always taken seriously. The respondent must remain calm, gather as much



information as possible using the Bomb Threat Response Guide and treat the threat as genuine until established otherwise.

- 4.4 Notify the school administrator(s) immediately who will call the Police, Superintendent and Communications Services.
- 4.5 Bomb Threats to schools could be received in different ways, most commonly telephone or online. Office staff are informed on how to support the response to a Bomb Threat.
- 4.6 The decision to evacuate lies with the principal in consultation with the Superintendent and Police based on the information collected.
- 4.7 Ensure that all outside doors are locked.
- 4.8 The principal will call for an immediate visual search to be conducted by staff in the building.
- 4.9 Staff conduct a visual search of immediate, familiar work areas. Each school plan will include the search of occupied and unoccupied areas.
- 4.10 Staff will report back to the principal as soon as possible

5.0 Receiving the Information

- 5.1 The responding staff member should take note of the following:
 - if the caller sounds familiar and male or female;
 - the approximate age of the caller;
 - anything distinct about the caller's voice or unique speech characteristics;
 - identifiable background noises;
 - the condition or emotional state of the caller (e.g., whether the caller seems to be intoxicated, excited, or angry).
- 5.2 If possible, write down:
 - 5.2.1 the time and date of the call;
 - 5.2.2 the phone number of the caller if displayed;
 - 5.2.3 the exact wording of the threat;
 - 5.2.4 the phone number or line on which the call was received;
 - 5.2.5 the caller's number, if shown on call display;
 - 5.2.6 the exact location of the explosive device and the time of detonation, if that information is revealed by the caller;
 - 5.2.7 the type of explosive device and what it looks like (e.g., pipe bomb, truck bomb), if that information is revealed by the caller;
 - 5.2.8 the caller's name, if that information is revealed by the caller; and,
 - 5.2.9 the time when the caller hangs up.
- 5.3 Attempt to ask the following questions:
 - Who is this?
 - Was it you who placed the bomb?
 - When is the bomb going to explode?
 - Where is the bomb right now?
 - What does the bomb look like?
 - What kind of bomb is it?
 - What will cause the bomb to explode?

6.0 Visual Search

- 6.1 Staff will conduct a visual search of their designated area.
- 6.2 Plans will also identify and prioritize unoccupied areas to be visually inspected in the building and the exterior and parking lots, entrances, cafeterias, auditoriums, hallways, stairways and elevators, washrooms, service and mechanical rooms and spaces.
- 6.3 Staff should look for:
 - 6.3.1 something that looks out of place or should not be there;
 - 6.3.2 signs of forced entry;
 - 6.3.3 an object like the description in the Bomb Threat;



- 6.3.4 suspicious objects or packaging;
- 6.3.5 objects with the presence of tape, wire or explosive wrappings;
- 6.3.6 any signs of tampering with electrical installations.

6.4 If a Suspicious Object is not found, the principal/supervisor will:

- 6.4.1 Consult with Police and the Superintendent.
- 6.4.2 Communicate an all-clear to employees and that no further action is required.
- 6.4.3 Update Communication Services.

6.5 If a Suspicious Object is found the staff member will:

- 6.5.1 Notify the principal.
- 6.5.2 Ensure that no one approaches a suspicious object or disturbs it in any way.
- 6.5.3 Clear everyone from the immediate area.
- 6.5.4 The Principal will:
 - Consult with Police and Superintendent.
 - Assist in clearing surrounding areas (including floors above and below).
 - Advise employees not to use cell phones or 2-way radios.
 - Follow evacuation procedures (OPS 400.27), rerouting where necessary to avoid the area(s) where suspicious object(s) have been located.
 - Students and school personnel will only return to the school building on the direction of the principal after consultation with the Police.

7.0 Communication During a Bomb Threat

- 7.1 The use of proper terminology regarding school emergency procedures is very important. All school emergency plans will clearly explain how to respond to a Bomb Threat and the terminology used.
- 7.2 The principal/supervisor will communicate with all occupants, tenants and visitors (permit holders, daycare centres etc.).
- 7.3 The main office will ensure that both a telephone line and a cell phone connection are kept open for incoming communication from Police, Board personnel etc.

8.0 Floor Plans

- 8.1 Accurate, up-to-date floor plans are a key component of Bomb Threat and explosives incident response plans.
- 8.2 Floor plans should be posted throughout the school, at least in every classroom and at every entry point to the school.
- 8.3 Floor plans should clearly identify entrances and exits as well as routes that staff and students are to take during an evacuation.
- 8.4 Command post locations and off-site evacuation locations should not be identified on posted or publicly circulated copies of the floor plans.
- 8.5 Floor plans should be available to all emergency service responders who may be involved in a search of the premises when they arrive on the scene. Police should be provided with both hard copies and electronic copies of floor plans.

9.0 School Bus Considerations

- 9.1 Notify the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's Transportation Services that the school has received a Bomb Threat. The Transportation Department will provide direction.

9.2 School Bus Arrivals

If buses are arriving at the school with students:

- Redirect to an alternate drop-off site.
- Use bus lists to record the names of students who have been relocated.
- If necessary, notify parents/caregivers to collect students at the alternate site.



9.3 School Bus Departures

If students can be safely dismissed from the school.

- Have staff escort students to buses using the most secure exit.
- Use bus lists to record the names of students who are placed on buses.
- Have staff remain on site until all students have departed by bus or have been collected by parents.

If students cannot be safely dismissed from the school:

- Retain students pending instructions from Police and Emergency Services, Superintendent, Manager of Communications and Student Transportation Services.

9.4 School Buses in Transit

If a school bus approaches a designated drop-off site where:

- a. Emergency Services are restricting access, **or**
- b. Transportation Dispatch has advised of an emergency situation; the driver will follow established Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's Student Transportation protocols.

10.0 Follow-Up

10.1 In consultation with the Manager of Communications and Community Relations:

- Update the school answering system message.
- Prepare a scripted response to be given to callers.
- Amend auto-attend message if needed.
- Prepare a letter for the school community to communicate the details of the incident and response.

10.2 Debrief the incident and response with staff.

10.3 Debrief the incident and response with students as needed.

11.0 Communication with Parents/Guardians/Community

11.1 General

- 11.1.1 School Principals will communicate general information regarding school emergency measures.
- 11.1.2 Schools will provide regular emergency procedure reminders for parents including the emergency off-site location for staff and students should the need arise to relocate students in an emergency.
- 11.1.3 Parents are encouraged to ensure their contact information at the school is up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.

11.2 During a Bomb Threat Situation

- 11.2.1 Depending upon the circumstances, it is not always possible to provide instant public notification during an emergency at a school. While all efforts will be made to provide timely information regarding any ongoing emergency to parents/guardians, the primary concern of the school board in such instances is to ensure the safety and security of students, staff and property.
- 11.2.2 Parents and guardians must not contact their children in the school via cell phone.
- 11.2.3 Communication Services will facilitate all communication, in consultation with Police Services.
- 11.2.4 Regular updates will be provided if the situation is prolonged.
- 11.2.5 The Board and/or school will send home communication regarding the incident at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 11.2.6 Police Services may determine that a parent, guardian or caregiver staging area needs to be established where parents, guardians or caregivers can go to learn the most up-to-date information about the situation at the school. This site will be an area away from the immediate emergency threat.