

St Matthew's C.E. Primary School



Emergency Response Procedures

Agreed by the Governing Body
November 2021
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PURPOSE

This document defines the procedures for carrying out the immediate and appropriate response to an emergency situation other than fire. This document should be read in conjunction with the 'Fire Evacuation Procedures' and 'Managing the Response to Critical Incidents and Emergencies Plan' for the school.

Potential Emergency Situations

1. Bomb Threats - may be telephoned, written or directly spoken to staff
2. Suspect Devices - found on premises – such as incendiary and explosive devices
3. Explosion - eg. gas main, boiler or some other external or internal cause
4. Flooding - inside the building or from outside sources - may be clean or foul water
5. External Fire - may threaten our buildings from surrounding woodland or produce large quantities of smoke.
6. Invasion of Premises or grounds - by unauthorised persons, aggrieved parent, etc. could give rise to danger of hostage taking for example
7. Local external danger resulting in police evacuation order.
8. Gas escape

The above list is by no means exhaustive. Depending on the type of threat presented by the situation, a response other than evacuation of the building may be appropriate. The essential difference in evacuating a building in response to a danger other than a fire is that the evacuation may need to be 'controlled' along specific routes to avoid the danger area. The situation may also require the choice of an assembly point well away from the school site. These emergency procedures allow a flexible approach to each threat or emergency and to the decision of whether or not to evacuate the building.

It should always be recognised that, depending on the type of emergency, the correct response may be to stay in the building rather than to evacuate into the danger itself.

RISK ASSESSMENT

A five-step management approach will be used to identify, assess, reduce, control and monitor the dangers to children, staff and other persons. The process will be carried out as follows:

1. Taking basic precautions at all times
2. Receiving information of a potential threat
3. Assessing the threat
4. Managing and responding to the threat
5. Recovering from the incident

Taking basic precautions

St Matthew's Church will be used as a suitable alternative location for evacuation if this is deemed necessary by the situation

The first line of defence against any emergency is to have preventative measures in place. The existing school security precautions should always be followed, for example, to reduce the opportunities for an intruder from gaining access to the school.

Receiving information of potential threat

Imminent danger could come in many guises not just the most obvious such as a bomb threat. Notification of the threat is most likely to come from the police, but may come from staff who have seen a potential danger through a classroom window (eg. a fire in the adjacent woods or an intruder on the field). In all cases the information must be passed immediately to the Headteacher (or her deputy).

In the case of a bomb threat made by telephone, it is important that the person receiving the threat obtains as much information as possible from the caller. The questions below will be on a prompt card held in the school office.

- When is the bomb going to explode?
- Where is it right now?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will cause it to explode?
- Did you place the bomb?
- Why do you do so?
- Where are you?
- What is your name?
- What is your address?
- Gender of caller:
- Phone Number(Both receiving and originating):
- Estimated age:
- Caller's Voice:
- Time Call Taken
- Accent (specify):
- Date: __/__/__

Assessing the threat

The Headteacher will:

- receive and consider the available information
- inform the authorities/police if relevant
- assess the risk in conjunction with the police taking into account all known factors
- follow police instructions, or make her own decisions where appropriate

The possible actions available to the Headteacher will depend on the threat. The choice depends on the assessment of the threat and the risk of injury which the situation presents. In exceptional circumstances, the police may insist that the premises are evacuated or that children and staff remain inside. Otherwise, the management of the situation and the choice of action will rest with the Head teacher. Possible choices of action are:

- to evacuate the school immediately by sounding the fire alarm (and by following normal fire evacuation procedures)
- to evacuate the school immediately but without sounding the fire alarm The church may be used in this instance as an alternative evacuation site. This will require notifying the staff directly of the need to evacuate, the evacuation route and the destination.
- to warn and prepare staff for evacuation but wait until situation is clearer
- to instigate a 'lock down' procedure where all children are to remain in /return to their classrooms where teachers will lock classroom doors, close windows, close blinds and await further instructions
- to do nothing (only when the risk is assessed as very low)

In all cases the need for evacuation and prompt action to safeguard staff and the children must be weighed against the possibility that hasty, ill-considered action might have the opposite effect.

Managing and responding to the threat or danger

The response should be tailored to match the perceived threat. Rarely should immediate and wholesale evacuation be the answer. It is important that the reasons for this are understood because people may be led into danger, eg. directly past a suspect device or other danger.

Once the threat has been identified, a selective controlled evacuation may be necessary but generally not by use of the fire alarm because all control will then be lost.

In the event that any evacuation takes place, the office staff will, as for a fire alarm, bring a mobile phone, all registers and the school emergency grab bag. Staff will be responsible for taking registers as soon as possible as in the case of fire.

If evacuation is deemed necessary due to a gas leak, windows should be opened by staff as part of the evacuation as far as possible

Post- incident recovery.

After any serious incident children and staff may be in shock and will need to be given time to recover. They may also need counselling services.

It is likely that there will be interest from the press following such an incident. In the event of damage to the school, there may be disruption to normal school operation.

Post-incident and longer term procedures will follow the recommendations in the 'Managing the Response to Critical Incidents and Emergencies Plan' for the school.