

From Pittsburgh Public Schools

E. 2. a. BOMB THREATS

The threat of a bomb in a school building is indeed a frightening situation. Most often, these threats turn out to be hoaxes which present no real physical danger to students, staff or property. Occasionally, real bombs are placed in schools by a person or persons with serious intentions. Therefore, each bomb threat must be treated seriously and investigated to the greatest degree possible in the event it is real.

Crucial information can be gathered regarding the threat itself. Some threats come in the form of a written letter or note, but most often the threats are made by telephone. In order to assure the safety of all students and staff, certain procedures should be followed when a threat is made. These procedures must be reviewed with all secretarial, clerical, custodial and professional staff.

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES:

1. If the threat is made by phone, the person taking the call should ascertain as much information as possible by using a standard Bomb Threat Form. (see page 56)
2. If the threat is written and after a phoned in bomb threat, notify the Principal, the Police (911), School Police (622-3520) and building security.
3. The Principal should notify the custodian and other support staff, i.e., the nurse, cafeteria workers and aides. At this point, walkie-talkies should be turned off since certain types of radio signals could cause detonation of the bomb.
4. Based on initial information, the principal will make a decision regarding evacuation of the building.
5. If the evacuation option is chosen, a predetermined signal should be sent throughout the building and an orderly evacuation to designated safe areas should be carried out.
6. The designated safe area outside the building should be at least 300 feet from the building.
7. Teachers should carry roll books and take attendance as soon as the students are taken to a safe place.
8. If the evacuation option is not chosen, staff should be alerted by coded message that a bomb search of the building is to take place. The coded message can be unique to each school, but an example might be, THIS IS A MESSAGE FOR ALL STAFF, THE GREEN CODE IS ACTIVATED - FOLLOW PROCEDURES.
9. Teachers would search their classrooms. When a questionable object is discovered, they would ask the students, "to whom does this belong?"

10. Whether evacuation does or does not occur, a systematic search of the building by designated staff members under the direction of the Chief of School Safety should take place.
11. Designated staff members should include the custodian, School Police, and school security.
12. If a bomb or suspicious object is found, it should not be moved or touched in any way. At this point, the Pittsburgh Police should be notified that a possible bomb has been found. They will then enter the building and remove the suspicious object.
13. The Pittsburgh Police will give the all-clear signal to re-enter the building.
14. The Office of Public Affairs should be notified regarding the release of information to the media.
15. The Student Assistance Staff should be notified regarding possible counseling of students and staff following the incident.
16. Parents should ALWAYS be notified of the incident and given pertinent information regarding the safety of their children.