

It is the goal of the Watauga County Board of Education (the “board”) to provide a process by which school system personnel can respond quickly and effectively to any threat to the safety of their students and staff. Therefore, school personnel are required to follow this regulation, and any other implementing regulations promulgated by the superintendent, in preparing for, responding to and following up on the communication of any threat that a bomb or other destructive device has been or will be placed on school grounds.

The principal or designee of each school will develop a plan that addresses how threats that a bomb or other destructive device is on school grounds (hereafter “bomb threat”) will be handled at the principal’s school. The plan must address the following items.

A. ANTICIPATING A BOMB THREAT

1. Communication and Coordination with Law Enforcement

The principal shall establish and maintain a process for ongoing communication and coordination among school staff and all appropriate public safety authorities for purposes of planning for, training for, and responding to any bomb threat. The principal shall establish a bomb threat response team consisting of the principal; the superintendent; and persons representing teachers, custodians, office staff, transportation providers and parents. The principal shall also request participation by persons representing local law enforcement and fire/rescue agencies.

2. Training of School Personnel

The principal shall arrange for the training of all staff in responding to threats and in searching for bombs and other potentially destructive devices. This training must include at least one drill annually for the school staff and others involved in responding to bomb threats.

a. Full Staff Training

The principal shall ensure that all staff members are trained about their responsibilities in the event of a bomb threat. Such responsibilities may include executing proper evacuation procedures, ensuring the safety of students and staff, noting the absence of any students, conducting quick but complete visual scans of their workplace and adhering to the requirements for reporting specific information. Substitute teachers and other substitute school personnel must be made aware of this regulation and staff obligations, including their own specific obligations, during a bomb threat.

b. Telephone Operators Training

The principal shall ensure that all staff members whose regular duties include answering incoming telephone calls are trained in the protocol to use when confronted by a telephone bomb threat.

c. Training for Staff Participating in a Search

The principal shall ensure that all staff members participating in a search for bombs or other destructive devices are first trained by appropriate public safety personnel regarding the potential danger and the proper sequence and technique involved.

3. Instruction of Students

The principal shall ensure that all students are instructed about proper conduct during a bomb threat, the potential criminal and civil penalties and school discipline associated with making a bomb threat and the disruption and costs to the educational process stemming from a bomb threat.

4. Pre-arranged Signal

The principal shall establish a signal for announcing a bomb threat and train staff to recognize and respond to the signal.

5. Precautions

The principal shall take all reasonable precautions to protect the school environment in the event of a bomb threat.

a. Call Tracing Capacity

The principal shall assess the feasibility of caller ID or other call-tracing capacity on telephones and, if appropriate, recommend the addition of such a service.

b. Locking Work Areas

The principal shall ensure that school employees with access to lockable workspaces, such as closets and cabinets, keep them locked when not in use.

c. Trash

The principal shall direct school personnel not to allow the accumulation of trash, boxes and other such articles inside or next to the building.

d. Parking

To the extent feasible, the principal shall ensure that parking spaces are not located close to the school building or that parking spaces close to the building are designated for staff use only. The principal also shall ensure parking restrictions are strictly enforced.

e. Evacuation Sites

The principal shall identify and designate evacuation gathering places, which are specific locations to which all students and staff members will go during an evacuation. The designated location must be away from heavily traveled roadways.

B. REACTING TO A BOMB THREAT

1. Notification

a. Duty of School Personnel

School personnel are required to notify the principal immediately of all bomb threats by telephone or other means. School personnel also shall notify the principal immediately of any suspicious devices on school property.

b. Telephone Answering

All personnel who regularly answer telephone calls from outside sources must be provided with a bomb threat card and report form to be placed within easy reach of their telephones. The card must have printed upon it information to ask for and information to listen for in the event a caller makes a bomb threat. Whoever receives the call shall attempt to transfer it to the principal or, if that cannot be done, ask the caller as many of the questions on the bomb threat card as he or she can, carefully noting all wording and other information. Any information received from the caller must be passed on to the principal as soon as possible.

c. Duty of Principal

Upon learning of the threat, the principal shall alert the appropriate officials, including local public safety agencies, utility companies and the superintendent.

2. Assessment

Upon learning of the threat, the principal shall consult with local public safety

officials and the superintendent, to the extent time permits. The principal is responsible for evaluating the credibility of the threat, deciding whether to direct a search of the building, and deciding whether and when to evacuate the building.

3. Evacuation

a. Extent of Evacuation

The principal, in consultation with the bomb threat response team (as possible under the circumstances), shall decide on the extent to which the building will be evacuated and/or the extent to which students will be assembled in one or several locations within the building. When students are evacuated they should be taken to a particular site no less than 300 feet from the building to avoid any potential damage from explosions.

b. Signaling

Through the use of the prearranged signal, the principal shall inform the staff immediately of the decision to evacuate the school.

c. Adjusting Evacuation Route and Sites

The principal shall direct personnel to adjust their usual evacuation routes and evacuation sites if necessary to avoid any suspected bomb or other destructive device or other potential danger.

d. Staff Obligations

In the event of an ordered evacuation, staff shall:

- 1) Scan their rooms or other work areas for signs of any unusual object or person and report any suspicious object or person to the principal or law enforcement authorities;
- 2) Ensure that windows and doors are locked;
- 3) Make sure that any students in their charge are guided to safety and remain with the students in their charge; and
- 4) Take attendance books, check attendance once the evacuation is accomplished and report names of any missing students to the principal.

e. Student Conduct

All students are required to obey all directions and maintain an orderly and

quiet demeanor.

f. Utilities

The principal shall decide whether the gas, electric and telephone should be turned off and, if so, make the appropriate arrangements.

g. Traffic

The principal shall ensure that there is a safe and efficient method for access to the building by public safety vehicles and for departure of students and staff.

h. Searches

The principal shall work with local law enforcement to determine who will be included in a search team. Under no circumstances will students be included. All search team members must be trained with respect to the dangers involved, precautions to observe and the techniques to follow. If any suspicious object is discovered, no school personnel should touch it. The presence of any suspicious object or person must be reported immediately to the principal and/or the public safety official in charge. If there is an explosion, the principal shall yield to the decisions of public safety officials.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -390.1

Cross References: School Safety (policy 4200/7270)

Adopted: May 11, 2015