

BOMB AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS THREATS

The Board recognizes that bomb and hazardous materials threats are a significant concern to the school unit. Whatever the reason for such threats, they represent a potential danger to the safety and welfare of students and staff and to the integrity of school property. Threats disrupt the instructional program and learning environment and also place significant demands on school financial resources and public safety services. These effects occur even when such threats prove to be false.

Any bomb or hazardous materials threat will be regarded as an extremely serious matter and treated accordingly. The Board directs the Superintendent to react promptly and appropriately to information concerning such threats and to initiate or recommend suitable disciplinary action.

A. Definitions

1. A “**bomb**” means an explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine, “Molotov cocktail” or other destructive device.
2. A “**look-alike bomb**” and “**look-alike substance**” means any apparatus or object that conveys the appearance of a bomb or other destructive device or material.
3. A “**threat**” is the communication, by any means, whether verbal or non-verbal, that a bomb or hazardous material has been, or will be, placed on school premises, including possession or placement of a bomb or look-alike bomb on school premises.
4. “**School Premises**” means any school property and any location where any school activities may take place.

B. Conduct Prohibited

1. No person shall make, or communicate by any means, whether verbal or non-verbal, a threat that a bomb has been, or will be, placed on school premises. Because of the potential for evacuation of the schools and other disruption of school operations, placement of a bomb or of a “look-alike” bomb on school premises will be considered a threat for the purpose of this policy.
2. It is also a violation of Board policy to communicate by any means that any toxic or hazardous substance or material has been placed, or will be placed, on school premises with the intent to endanger the safety and welfare of students or staff and/or to disrupt the operations of the schools. For the purpose of this policy, “toxic or hazardous substance or material” means any material or substance, including biomedical materials or organisms, that, when placed as threatened, could be harmful to humans.

C. Development of Threat Procedures

The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for developing and implementing procedures specific to threats as part of the school unit's Crisis Response Plan. These procedures are intended to inform administrators and staff of appropriate protocols to follow in the event that a threat is received and should include provisions to address:

1. Threat assessment (for the purpose of identifying a response that is in proportion to the threat, in light of what is necessary to ensure safety);
2. Building evacuation and re-entry (including selection of potential alternative sites for those who are evacuated);
3. Incident "command and control" (who is in charge, and when);
4. Communications contacts and mandatory threat reporting;
5. Parent notification process;
6. Training for staff members; and
7. Support services for students and staff.

The initial threat procedure will be subject to approval by the Board. The Superintendent/designee will be responsible for overseeing a review or evaluation of threat procedures prior to the Board's required annual approval of the school unit's Crisis Response Plan, or following implementation of the procedure in response to a specific threat.

D. Reporting of Threats

A student who learns of a threat or the existence of a threat on school premises must immediately report such information to the building principal, teacher, or other employee in a position of authority.

An employee of the school unit who learns of a threat shall immediately inform the building administrator. The building administrator shall immediately take appropriate steps to protect the safety of students and staff in accordance with the school unit's threat procedure, as developed under Section C, and inform the Superintendent of the threat.

All threats shall be reported immediately to the local law enforcement authority, as provided in the threat procedures.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for reporting any threat to the Department of Education within two business days of the incident. Reports will include the name of the school, the date and time of the threat, the medium used to communicate the threat, and whether or not the perpetrators have been apprehended.

E. Student Disciplinary Consequences

Making a bomb is a crime under Maine law. Any student suspected of making a threat shall be reported to law enforcement authorities for investigation and possible

prosecution. Apart from any penalty imposed by law, and without regard to the existence or status of criminal charges, a student who makes a threat shall be subject to disciplinary action by the school.

The administration may suspend and/or recommend for expulsion any student who makes a bomb threat. The making of a threat will be considered deliberately disobedient and deliberately disorderly within the meaning of 20-A M.R.S.A. § 1001(9) and will be grounds for expulsion.

In addition, a student who is found after hearing by the Board to have brought a bomb or hazardous material to school shall be expelled from school for at least one year in accordance with 20-A M.R.S.A. § 1001(9-A) and Policy JICIA, except that the Superintendent may modify the requirement for expulsion based on individual circumstances.

A student who has been identified through the IEP process as having a disability and whose conduct in violation of this policy is related to the disability shall be disciplined as provided in Policy JKF.

F. Aiding Other Students in Making Bomb or Hazardous Materials Threats

A student who knowingly encourages, causes, aids or assists another student in making or communicating a threat shall be subject to the disciplinary consequences described in Section E of this policy.

G. Failure to Report a Bomb or Hazardous Materials Threat

A student who fails to report information or knowledge of a threat or the existence of other destructive devices in a school building or on school property may be subject to disciplinary consequences, which may include suspension and/or expulsion.

H. Staff Disciplinary Consequences

A school system employee who makes or communicates a bomb or hazardous materials threat will be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary action taken shall be consistent with collective bargaining agreements, other employment agreements and Board policies.

A school system employee who fails to report information or knowledge of a threat or the existence of a bomb or hazardous material on school premises will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

I. Civil Liability

The school unit reserves the right to bring suit against any individual responsible for a violation of this policy and to seek restitution and other damages as permitted by law.

J. Lost Instructional Time

Instructional time lost as a result of a bomb or hazardous materials threat will be rescheduled at the earliest, practical opportunity. This determination will be made by the Superintendent in consultation with the principal and the Board of School Directors.

Time lost may be rescheduled on a weekend or vacation day, or after what would normally be the last day of the school year, except on days when schools must be closed as required by law. Consideration must be given to employee agreements and other pertinent factors.

K. Notification Through Student Handbook

All student handbooks and the Student Code of Conduct shall address the M.S.A.D. 68 bomb and hazardous materials threat policy and procedures and explain the educational consequences of such threats. In addition, student handbooks shall notify students and parents that bomb and hazardous materials threats violate Board policy and civil and criminal law.

Legal References: 18 U.S.C. § § 921; 8921
17-A M.R.S.A. § 210
20-A M.R.S.A. § § 263; 1001(9); 1001(9-A); 1001(17); 1001(18)

Cross References: EBCA – Crisis Response Plan
JKD – Suspension of Students
JKE – Expulsion of Students
JKF – Suspension/Expulsion of Students with Disabilities
JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety
Student Code of Conduct

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