

Office of the Director of
Higher Secondary Education
Housing Board Buildings
Santhi Nagar
Thiruvananthapuram.

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CIRCULAR

Sub :- Higher Secondary Education – Standard Operating
Procedure to deal with terrorist attack on schools-reg.

Ref :- Govt. letter No. 43/G3/15/G.Edn dated 8/1/2015


As per letter in reference, a copy of the standard operating procedure is received to deal with any terrorist attack on schools.

The aim of Standard Operating Procedure is to lay down guidelines and procedure for preventing and dealing with extremist attack on schools. A copy of the Standard Operating Procedure is enclosed herewith for strict compliance of the directions therein.

The Principals of all higher secondary schools are directed to take further necessary steps in the above matter.



**JOINT DIRECTOR (ACADEMIC)
In Charge Of Director**

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- 1) The Principals of all HSSs
 - 2) All Regional Deputy Directors
 - 3) SF

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ANY TERRORIST ATTACK ON SCHOOLS.

1. Background:

Experience gained in handling terrorism in recent years has shown that with a view to gain widespread media and public attention, bold terrorist attacks are undertaken. Places of large number of footfalls, malls, multi-plexes, hotels and schools, are most vulnerable for terrorist attacks. This necessitates to have in place a Standard Operating Procedure defining the role of officials of the concerned agencies participant to counter such attack in schools.

2. Aim of SOP:

The aim of this SOP is to lay down guidelines and procedure for preventing and dealing with extremist attack on schools. However, these are general guidelines. Every terrorist related incident is different and the action should be taken by all concerned keeping in mind the specifics of each situation, keeping in mind these general guidelines.

3. Identification of Schools:

The local police should identify or make a list of prominent/ high profile schools in their jurisdiction for the purpose of SOP.

4. Preventive Measures:

- 4.1 Each school should have concrete boundary wall, with 3 to 4 gates and each gate should be manned by at least 3 guards, on a 24- hours basis.
- 4.2 Details of telephone number of the Police Control Room and local police station should be maintained and updated regularly by the school authorities. These details should be displayed at prominent places so that in case of crisis, the Principal, teachers, students, staff or security guards or any one from the school may contact the Police. A nodal officer may be nominated to look after security arrangement in the school.
- 4.3 A telephone connection should be provided at the main gate of the School so that the guards can inform the Police in case of any emergency without waiting for informing the nodal officer or the Principal.
- 4.4 There should be proper illumination along the perimeter so that nobody can jump over the wall into the school in the night for any nefarious activity.
- 4.5 Concertina wire may be fixed on the iron grills above the boundary wall to deter any one from jumping over the wall.
- 4.6 Installation of CCTV systems all along the boundary as well as some additional locations inside the premises, to monitor the movement of any suspicious person,

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with recording facilities for the last three days, at least. The system should also have requisite video analytics to detect any intrusion and raise an audio as well as visual alarm. CCTV system alarm may also be connected to the identified gates to close them automatically.

- 4.7 Walkie Talkie sets for communication between security guards and nodal security officer be arranged, intercom between main gate/ other perimeter gates to the nodal security officer and the Principal of the School may be provided for efficient communication.
- 4.8 There should be centralized Public Announcement System between Nodal Officer and all classes/ library etc. by which instructions can be given to the students/ staff in each room, collectively or individually or in selected combination, may be installed.
- 4.9 A visual anti-sabotage check of the entire school should be carried out by the security staff of the school before the children start arriving in the morning. They should also check the footpath in front of the school, all along the boundary wall including the parking area to detect any suspicious objects lying unattended there.
- 4.10 **Alarm System:** In order to alert the entire security staff, Principal, Teachers and the students in case of any contingency, a suitable electric bell needs to be installed connecting all the gates to a nodal point in the school. The alarm system should also have a display panel to indicate the location from which the alarm has been raised. The alarm can be manually pressed by the guards or get activated automatically if any vehicle crashes into the gate. The nodal officer should immediately verify the reason for raising the alarm, inform the Principal, take action to initiate the contingency drill in the school and inform the police.

5. Action/ Active stage:

- 5.1 Response of the School Authorities in case of any Contingency: The drill for the School authorities may be divided into two parts namely contingency at the time of arrival/ departure of the children and secondary while the school is already functional.

Drill at the time of arrival/ departure of the children:

i. Kidnapping of children at the time of their arrival/ departure.

- a. The guard on duty at main gate or nodal officer should immediately inform the Police about the incident. Guards should give proper description of the vehicle, colors etc, so that police can impose Red Alert and search the suspected vehicle.
- b. The guards posted at main gate should immediately rush the children already on the road or footpath inside the school and close the school gates.
- c. Those who are still in the cars and buses and have not alighted should be told to move forward and leave the area.

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- d. The guards at the main gate should immediately press the alarm bell to close the intermediate gates to segregate and secure the children inside the school blocks. He should also inform the nodal security officer/ Principal of the school.

ii. Random Firing on the road near the School

- a. There should be two guards at the main gate at the time of arrival/ departure of children. Guard at the main gate should quickly take in all the children and close the gate.
- b. Another guard should direct the buses and vehicles from which the children have not yet alighted to move on quickly and get out of the area.
- c. Guards at main gate to inform the police and also the nodal security officer of the school.
- d. Alarm bells should be rung and intermediate gates be closed to prevent any children from coming outside.
- e. Rush the injured children/ other victims to the hospital.

iii. Armed Intrusion into the school with Hostage taking:

In case armed terrorists manage to enter the school and hold up teachers/ students/ others as hostages, the following action should be taken by the school authorities, besides the quick reaction team engaging the terrorists:

- a. Inform the Police
- b. Initially all the children and teachers should stay back in their respective rooms and those in veranda etc. rush into the nearest room, and not to indulge into any rash act in panic like running out towards door to escape etc. They should close the doors from inside and lie low in the classroom to escape random firing.
- c. The security guards should be identified gate-wise. They should rush out from their positions with the keys of the concerned gates to open them for safely sending the children out as and when possible. They shall check that the area outside is clear of miscreants and a passage is available, and open the gates when told to do so by teachers/ nodal security officer.
- d. If the location of the terrorists is known and there is safe passage available from the other classrooms to any of the gates, the children under the leadership of the respective teachers in a single file without making any noise should be taken out.
- e. Children may not be asked to collect/ gather in any open ground as they can become easy targets.
- f. In case of any doubt, there should be no movement and teacher/ school authority should wait for the police to arrive, contain the situation, surround the terrorist and provide a secured passage for the children to move out from their respective places to outside the school.
- g. One of guards available should rush to the main gate and direct the cars/ buses arriving subsequently to go back to their homes.

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iv. **Suspected explosive object found in the vicinity of school or inside the premises:**

- a. School staff, teacher and students should be regularly briefed not to touch any unattended object lying anywhere inside/ outside the school. In case any such object is found, the person who finds it should immediately bring it to the notice of the nodal security officer of the school. In case it is seen by a student, he should immediately bring it to the notice of his first available teacher, who in turn will inform the nodal security officer/ principal of the school. All should also be briefed to keep away from such an object.
- b. If there is a bomb scare, then children should not be collected in one place without first checking that area. Some place can be designated like auditorium/ field and there should be team of 8-10 people from the school who will quickly spread out and carry out a check of that area before collecting the children there.
- c. In case the bomb has already exploded, then cars and buses coming to the school with children should be told to go back home.
- d. The injured/ casualties be rushed to the hospitals.
- e. The nodal officer or the Principal or even the security guards available in the school should inform the Police at the earliest opportunity. The call will activate the police drill and they will respond accordingly.

Drill when the school is already functional:

- a. All the gates on the perimeter wall should be closed and locked after the arrival of children. The guard should open the door only for bonafide reasons. Once the gates are locked, the probability of forcible intrusion considerably reduces, as even the intruder understands that in case he tries to enter forcibly, the school authorities can call the police and they may be intercepted even before they can achieve their objectives. However, in case somebody tries to forcibly enter the school premises by forcing open the gate under threat of life to the guard or crash open the gate by driving the vehicle into the gate or jump over the wall, the following action should be taken:
- b. Guard at the main gate should inform police and the nodal security officer immediately.
- c. In case the guards on other gates notice the intrusion or any being threatened by intruders to open the gate, they should also immediately press the alarm bell. A code can be defined for ringing the bell in such a situation to convey the type of threat.
- d. The Nodal Security Officer should immediately raise general alert in the school and through centralized PA system inform the concerned to follow the security drill i.e. all children/ staff to go inside the rooms and to close them from inside.
- e. Nodal Security Officer to inform the Principal of the school.
- f. However, if the criminals/ terrorists still manage to enter the school and indulge in any criminal act, then the following drill should be followed for various acts:

(i) Kidnapping of children / Random firing with intention of mass killing of children inside the school:

It is presumed that the terrorists/ criminals having done their act have managed to escape. In such a case

- Inform the police again giving description of criminals/ terrorists, their number, along with details of escape vehicle, if noted.
- Nodal Security Officer to announce on PA system for teachers/ students and staff to stay inside their rooms.
- Injured/casualties, if any, be rushed to the hospitals.
- Those who have seen the kidnappers and noted their description be identified and requested to collect at one place to assist the police in investigation.
- Drill be activated to inform the parents and return of children.

(ii) For other situations the drill will be same as mentioned in para.

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6. Communication with the Parents:

It is very likely that the news of such an incident will breakout very fast and parents in panic would rush to the school. In order to ensure that parents do not rush to school and create obstructions in the subsequent operations by the police forces, they need to be informed to come to a pre-identified central place as close to the school as possible for the briefing as well as for handing over of rescued children. This can be achieved if the school can have a system of having the mobile nos. of all the parents of the children in a centralized database. A SMS can be drafted explaining the situation giving the necessary facts, place of their assembly for briefing etc. and the message sent to all. For this purpose, the local police should identify the place of assembly, in advance and provide a list, locality wise to all schools and also to the District Hqrs. And State Hqrs.

7. General Suggestions:

- 1) School gates be kept closed immediately after the arrival of children till the dispersal of children begins, to prevent any easy intrusion.
- 2) The telephone numbers of nearest hospital(s), police stations and assistance desks should be displayed prominently in the school.
- 3) Guards should be identified for each gate and there should be a list put up to specify who has keys to which gate. All gates should be covered by guards.
- 4) A centralized alarm system and also a PA system, through which classes can be addressed collectively as well as individually and selected combination should be installed.
- 5) All teachers/ staff should be briefed properly and apprised of any possible threats.
- 6) There should be a list with duties specified by names like which teacher/ staff would be responsible for controlling children, which one would inform police/

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hospital authorities, which one would be responsible for informing the parents and so on.

- 7) All the bus drivers to be briefed to respond quickly and drive away their buses with children if they see any commotion/ attack at the gate and directed by security guards to do so.
- 8) The guard at the gate should be alert to notice any suspicious person moving around or standing near the school.
- 9) A security check can be carried out in school by the staff to check if any object is lying unclaimed at various points such as in the classroom, at any gate, in the field and so on.
- 10) The antecedents of all the new staff members being employed in the school should be verified properly.
- 11) All labourers working in the school should be issued a temporary photo I- Card and they can be generally checked by security guards to prevent anyone of them from bringing anything (like bomb/ IED) to be implanted in the school.
- 12) School authorities should provide a copy of lay out plan of the school to the local police station in advance.

8. Advance Recce:

Local police along with the school may carry out an advance reconnaissance of the schools to prepare the operation to deal with any such contingency in future.

9. Mock Drill:

School authorities may conduct the briefing of the teachers/ students/ staff as well as the drill as per this SOP to ensure that everybody knows his/ her role in such an eventuality. They can also include local Police in their Mock Drill.