



Northfield Primary & Nursery School

Guidance for Dealing with Suspect Packages

Updated: February 2025 Review February 2026

Reviewed by: Stacy Smith

Dealing with suspect packages

A suspect package can be left anywhere by anyone, and can have any appearance, it should not be handled, moved or tampered with in any way. If in doubt about a package, leave it alone and report it immediately to the person in charge/Head Teacher, who will then contact the emergency services immediately.

Recognition of suspect letters and packages

Delivered items can include letters, packets and parcels and may contain:

Explosive or incendiary devices

Sharps or blades

Offensive materials; chemical/biological/radiological or nuclear material.

Possible indications of a suspicious package may include:

- Protruding wires / tin foil
- Noise or smoke from the package
- Grease marks on the wrapping
- Unusual sounds i.e. ticking
- A letter that is unusually thick (over 5mm), excessively heavy, lopsided or stiffened
- An inner envelope which is tightly taped or bound/excessive wrapping
- Pinhole in the wrapping
- Strange odour, normally almonds or marzipan
- Un-typed address which is in block capitals, no franking mark, errors in the address
- Is the package hidden deliberately or does it appear to be simply left behind as lost property?
- Is the package positioned behind a large plant pot or bench in a reception area?

Possible additional Chemical, Biological, Radiological (CBR) indicators

This list is not exhaustive due to the diverse nature of the materials, however, some of the more common and obvious indicators are as follows:

- Warnings on the letter or package.
- Unexpected granular or finely powdered material and usually the consistency of coffee, sugar or baking powder.
- Unexpected sticky substances, sprays or vapours.
- Unexpected pieces of metal or plastic, such as discs, rods.
- Strange smells e.g. garlic-like, fishy, fruity, mothballs, peppery, meaty, and rotten.
- Stains or dampness on the packaging.
- Sudden onset of illness or irritation of skin, eyes or nose

If a suspect package is found, the area around it must be kept clear of people until the package has been made safe by relevant authorities.

Anyone receiving a suspicious delivery is unlikely to know exactly what it is. Delivered items come in a variety of shapes and sizes, which can also include bulky deliveries (e.g. office equipment, stationary and catering supplies). It is easy to be over cautious about this but risk can be managed by matching deliveries against orders, only accepting those that are expected; using trusted suppliers, maintaining vigilance and inspecting deliveries. Anything suspicious should be reported immediately and not handled or moved.

If mail becomes suspect whilst being opened it should be placed on the nearest level surface as gently as possible and away from flammable material.

What to do with a suspect package

- Do not open it
- Do not bend the envelope or package, or place it in water
- Do shut the windows in the room
- Do leave the room closing the door
- Do not go back into the room
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or other part of your body in case your hands are contaminated
- Do wash your hands thoroughly
- If required evacuate the building/immediate vicinity keeping clear of the suspect package

- Do not use your mobile phone within 15 meters of the item you believe is suspicious.

All mail/deliveries to be delivered via the main reception, and where possible delivered through the external window hatch.

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