



British School  
of Bucharest

## Earthquake Policy and Procedure

### Introduction

Romania is well known as a seismically prone area. Earthquakes with the Richter magnitude of over 7.0 occur on average every 30 years. During the earthquake of 4 March 1977 (Richter magnitude 7.2), over 30 buildings collapsed in Bucharest, killing 1,424 people. (Other earthquakes in Romania – 1986, of 7 Richter magnitude and in 1990 of 6.7 Richter magnitude.)

Earthquakes strike without warning and the major shock is usually followed by numerous after-shocks which may last for weeks or months. An earthquake's effect on buildings will vary from building to building and from the strength of the tremor. Fire alarm or sprinkler systems may be activated by the shaking. Stairways will need to be inspected for damage before they can be used.

The major threat of injury during an earthquake is from falling objects and debris, and many injuries are sustained while entering or leaving buildings. Therefore, it is important to remain inside the building, quickly moving away from windows, glass and free standing partitions and shelves and taking cover under a sturdy desk or table, in a doorway, or against an inside wall and covering your head with hands or clothing ( Duck/Cover/Hold) until the shaking stops.

This is a frightening and difficult experience for all involved. It is important that teachers rehearse procedures with the age group of the children in mind and are all aware of the school's evacuation plan, the nearest exit point.

A detailed plan and procedure in case of an earthquake occurs, will minimise risks and eventually save lives. The relevant officers within the UK and US embassies have been consulted as this policy has been constructed.

### Earthquake safety procedure - Indoors

All staff need to wear their identity badge with the whistle and torch at all times.

- It is essential that all staff remain calm in the event of an earthquake.
- Do not attempt to leave the building during the tremor.
- Give DUCK COVER HOLD command
- Get under desk or table or other sturdy furniture with back to windows
- If notebooks or blazers are handy, hold over head for added protection
- Stay away from windows, bookcases, or other heavy objects
- In science labs, activate emergency shut-off for all power and extinguish all burners if possible, before taking cover; stay away from hazardous chemicals that may spill. Science teacher and science technician to check the condition of substances considered a risk.
- Drop to knees, clasp both hands behind neck, bury face in arms, make body as small as possible, close eyes, and cover ears with forearms. Posture must be such that the most vulnerable areas (the neck and chest) are protected. Teachers should protect themselves and prevent personal injury during an earthquake
- Count aloud to sixty and then sixty backwards. Ask students to count with you to minimise fear. For the youngest classes, teachers will lead appropriate songs during this time.
- After the shaking stops start counting again and count aloud to sixty. Sixty seconds after the shaking has stopped, students should be instructed to check carefully for injuries and dangerous objects such as broken glass before moving and standing up
- The Facilities team or Security will turn off the gas and water pipes. Gas pipes are labelled and located in the back of the guard office.

### Evacuation

- Follow Drop/Cover procedures
- Call names out clearly ( done as game according to age range) to check for injured and unconscious children
- Keep children in the drop/cover position whilst you assess injuries
- Only attempt to evacuate children with minor injuries – rescue services will need to attend to the injured
- Ask children to climb out from their cover – proceed with caution
- Keep the children together and walk them out of the building ( after checking the state of the stairs, extreme care must be taken for loose debris) and take them to muster point
- Keep children together
- Keep a safe distance from any downed power lines



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British School of Bucharest Nursery / Primary / Secondary  
The School is operated by Crawford House Foundation  
Registered 3/25.01.2016. Fiscal Code 24879960

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- Teachers need to work in a buddy system with another teacher or classes so that if one teacher is injured, the other will take care of students and get them to safety.

#### **If it is not possible to evacuate building:**

- Follow Drop/Cover procedure
- Call names out clearly to check for injured and unconscious children
- Keep children in the drop/cover position whilst you assess injuries (if possible)
- Keep movement to a minimum to avoid further movement of debris
- Use the whistle to attract rescuers
- The torch must be used if you are in darkness and /or buried
- Keep taking name checks of the children to check their status every 5 minutes

#### **Earthquake safety procedure - Outdoors**

- Assume SQUAT AND COVER position in an open space and protect vulnerable areas (the neck and chest). If notebooks or blazers are handy, hold over head for added protection, or use hands if necessary
- Maintain position until shaking stops
- Move away from buildings, trees, overhead wires, and poles
- After tremor stops go to Muster Point and make yourself known
- Do NOT enter the building until it is determined to be safe

#### **Muster Point: the black pitch though it inappropriate the grass area in front of Crawford Building will be used.**

- Report your last location for search of injured and missing children to the site coordinator or to the next senior person who has assumed responsibility
- Line up children
- Office to distribute to registers to teachers and teachers to check children
- First Aid Kits to be taken to Muster Points Office to check attendance of staff
- Any injuries to be registered with the site coordinator and a list to be compiled immediately
- Injured children to be kept together and designated member of staff to supervise them
- Report any missing students to Site Coordinator immediately and designated members of staff to search for any missing children
- Walkie talkies to be distributed to designated member of staff
- HOS or site coordinator to designate a member of staff to go to Parent Meeting Area and keep parents away from site
- One member of staff designated by site coordinator or HOS to attempt to call for rescuers.
- DO NOT return to building
- Stay alert for aftershocks:
- If a secondary earthquake or “aftershock” occurs whilst the evacuation procedures are outside, students/staff should sit down and stay down.
- If ordered by Site Coordinator, start releasing children to parents, starting with youngest children. This release of children will be recorded.

#### **In case of a minor earthquake**

In the case of any tremor, no matter how minor, parents will be worried about the safety and welfare of their children:

- Buildings are inspected by maintenance team who will report back to SLT
- SLT will return children to their classes where applicable
- After registers have been taken by teachers, the office will collect them
- Office will post a message on web site to inform parents of status and send an SMS
- Office staff to field phone calls to confirm return of students in their classes
- If parents need to take child home the Office will notify relevant HOS and teacher and the child will be brought to the gate.

#### **Pick up point- Parent Meeting Area**

In case of a major earthquake children will be sent home and released to parents as the parents arrive at the school to pick them up. BSB staff could supervise and stay with the children for 72 hours or longer from the Earthquake.



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- Parents are informed by Security that they are not allowed to enter the site
- Children must not leave unless the site coordinator has ensured the registers shows the parent is picking-up
- Children being collected by alternate adults must be checked off, adults need to sign the children off, the name of the adult need to be written down together with contact number and address where the child can be found. British Embassy parents have given notice that a representative from their embassy can collect all children.

When the tremor occurs, the usual Drop/Cover, Squat/ Cover and building evacuations procedures will take place. A major quake will possibly cause more debris to fall and perhaps structural damage.

It is unlikely mobile phones will be working as network coverage will be used by emergency services.

It is important to stay as calm as possible.

It is important to remember that in the event of a major earthquake, the extent of injuries cannot be predicted. It may be the key people themselves injured, so it will be important to make yourself known, find out who the alternates are, and report to them.

### Activities off site

If an earthquake occurs while on school trips, one of the teachers who accompany the children on trip needs to find the nearest police station or alternative means and try to get in touch with the school, while the other teacher is supervising the children.

### Children on the bus

Bus drivers need to stop the car on the side of the road, away from falling objects and wait until shaking stops. The bus driver will then continue the journey, roads permitting.

### In the library

Students and teachers should move away from where books and bookshelves may fall, take cover.

### The dome

Students and teachers to assemble at a fixed point inside- drop and cover. In the event of the dome collapsing, the point of reference for rescue will then be in one area.

**The school carries out earthquake drills, with class teachers and specialist teachers giving the drop/cover command at least three times each academic year.**

Senior Leadership Team  
September 2017  
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