



Hoax bomb threat emails to Glasgow schools

19 October 2026

Public

Info to 18:30 UK time, reviewed 26 October 2026

A short public summary of OTAS-TA-001, the OTAS Operational Threat Assessment of the same date

Assessed risk

LOW**Assessed risk: LOW.**

Police are treating the emails as a hoax. No device has been reported found.

Up to 300

Northern Ireland schools that reported the email to the PSNI. The Education Authority said more than 300

Source [1][41]

Around 148

Schools in the Glasgow City Council area, from media reports citing the council

Source [11]

More than half

Of Scotland's 32 councils confirmed that schools in their area received the email

Source [3]

More than 300

Calls to Police Scotland about the messages

Source [9]

At least 4

Countries where schools reported the emails on 19 October: the UK, Hungary, Italy and Serbia

Source [1][15][16][44]

None

Devices reported found. PSNI checks found nothing untoward

Source [1]

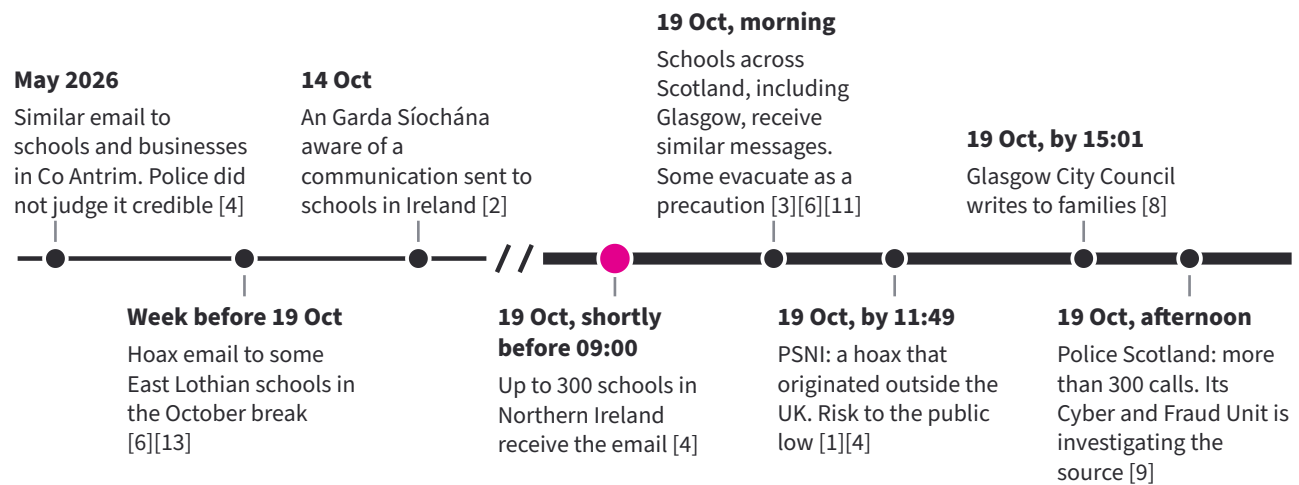
Summary

On Monday 19 October 2026, emails claiming that bombs had been placed in schools reached hundreds of schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and others in Hungary, Italy and Serbia [1][3][15][16][44]. Police Scotland is treating the messages as a hoax and is investigating the source, and the PSNI said the email originated outside the UK and that the risk to the public is low [1][9]. No device has been reported found at any school in the sources reviewed, and OTAS Live Ltd assesses the overall residual risk as LOW. The main remaining risks are repeat hoaxes, disruption, distress and rumour, and the What to do section sets out what each group can do.

Key point. No public statement lists which Glasgow schools received the email, and this brief does not say whether any named school did. Families should rely on their child's school or Glasgow City Council for that information.

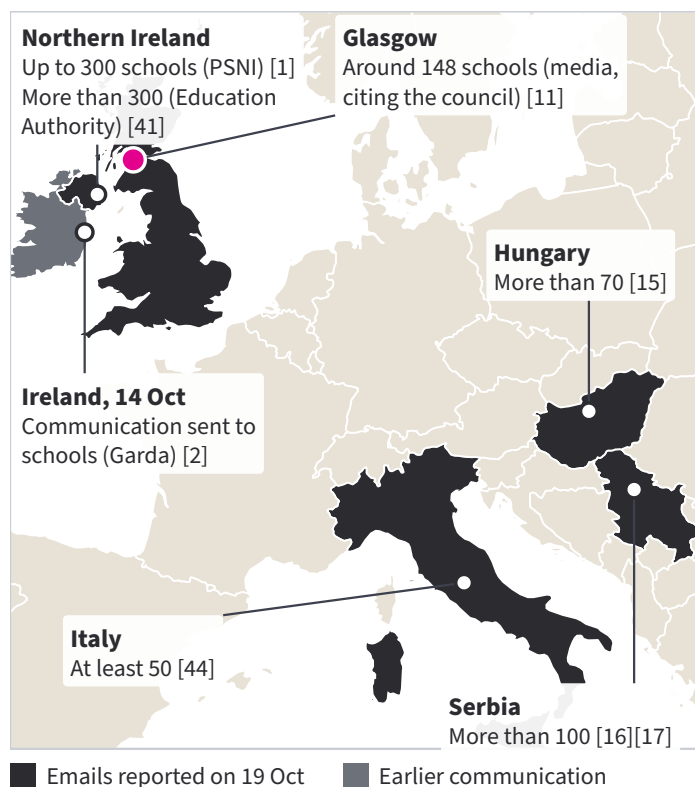
What happened

Figure 1. Earlier similar emails, then hundreds of schools on one morning



Sources: as shown against each event. All times are UK time. The scale is broken between 14 and 19 October. No published source links these earlier emails to 19 October.

Figure 2. Schools in at least 4 countries reported the emails on 19 October



Sources: as labelled. Figures are 'up to', 'around', 'more than' or 'at least' figures, so they are approximate. No total for Scotland had been published by the cut-off. No published source confirms whether the incidents in other countries are linked to those in the UK. Map data: Natural Earth (public domain).

Official positions

Police Scotland [9][45]

"These messages are being treated as a hoax." On 20 October it added that there is "nothing to suggest any threat to the public". Its Cyber and Fraud Unit is investigating the source. For specific schools, contact the local authority.

PSNI [1]

Up to 300 schools reported the same email, which originated outside the UK. "At this stage we consider risk to the public as low."

Glasgow City Council [8]

Wrote to families that "the police are treating the threat in the email as a hoax", and that safety is its top priority.

Scottish Government [13]

Police Scotland is investigating the messages and treating them as a hoax.

Education Authority (NI) [41]

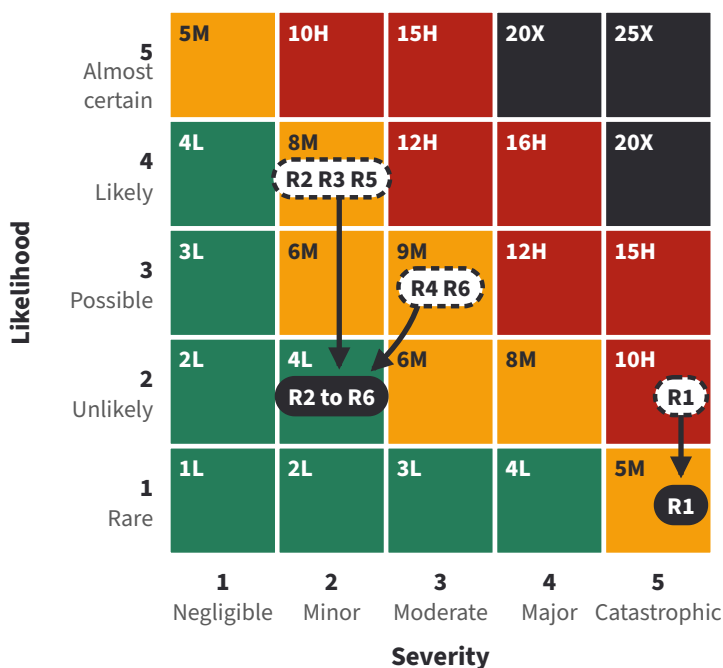
Believed more than 300 schools had received the emails. The majority of schools remained open.

Note. The police have not said who sent the emails. This brief makes no assessment of who is responsible.

Threat and risk assessment

Intent	Capability	Pattern	Watch for
The messages appear designed to cause fear, alarm and disruption. ProtectUK says that "the vast majority of bomb threats are hoaxes designed to cause alarm and disruption" [34].	The same email reached hundreds of schools in several countries on one morning [1][15][16]. No ability to place a device has been shown, and checks found nothing untoward [1].	Generalised wording with no specific room, time or demand [1][4]. Earlier similar messages in Co Antrim, East Lothian and Ireland [2][4][6]. No published source links these earlier emails to 19 October.	Specific detail, a suspicious item, suspicious behaviour near a school, copycat messages, or a change in the official assessment. Any of these: review at once and follow police advice.

Figure 3. Controls bring 5 of the 6 risks down to Low



Source: OTAS assessment on the OTAS RA-01 matrix (likelihood 1 to 5 multiplied by severity 1 to 5). Bands: L Low 1 to 4, M Medium 5 to 9, H High 10 to 16, X Intolerable 17 to 25. Dashed chips: before controls. Solid chips: with controls.

Overall residual risk

LOW

Before controls: High, because of R1 (10H). The other five risks were Medium. Consistent with the PSNI's view that the risk to the public is low [1]

No.	Risk	Before	With controls
R1	A real device at a Glasgow school	10H	5M
R2	Disruption from this or a repeat hoax	8M	4L
R3	Distress to pupils, staff and families	8M	4L
R4	Copycat hoax messages	9M	4L
R5	Misinformation and rumour	8M	4L
R6	Harm from a poorly managed response	9M	4L

Why the device risk scores 5M. R1 is scored 5 Medium only because its severity is fixed at Catastrophic. On the RA-01 matrix, 5 is the lowest score any catastrophic hazard can receive. Its likelihood is Rare, which is consistent with the PSNI's view that the risk to the public is low [1]. It does not mean that a device is expected. The overall rating is LOW because R1's only Medium score comes from its fixed Catastrophic severity, its likelihood is Rare, and the other five risks are Low.

Main controls: police advice on credibility, no automatic evacuation, a named decision-maker, staff vigilance and a 999 call for any suspicious item. Also calm official messages in community languages, and controlled release of pupils to known adults.

What to do



999

Emergency, or a suspicious item



101

Police Scotland: information, or a similar message



Parents and carers

- Rely on official updates from the school, Glasgow City Council and Police Scotland [9].
- Do not share the email, screenshots or rumours.
- Received a similar message? Do not reply or forward it. Report it on 101, or 999 in an emergency.
- Do not collect your child unless the school asks you to.
- Talk to your child calmly. Remind older children that a hoax threat is a crime.



Schools

- Do not reply to, forward or delete the email. Keep it and the logs for the police [34].
- Call 999, then tell the council. Complete the bomb threat checklist [35].
- Do not evacuate automatically. Use the credibility questions [34][36].
- Suspicious item: do not touch it. Evacuate away from it and call 999 [34].
- Name a decision-maker and a deputy. Release pupils only to known adults.



Glasgow City Council, to consider

- Publish one statement with the number of schools affected.
- Give head teachers written decision support, aligned with Police Scotland advice.
- Use one update route for schools and one for families.
- Preserve emails and logs centrally for the police. Offer translated templates.
- Prepare for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law), expected in spring 2027 [38].

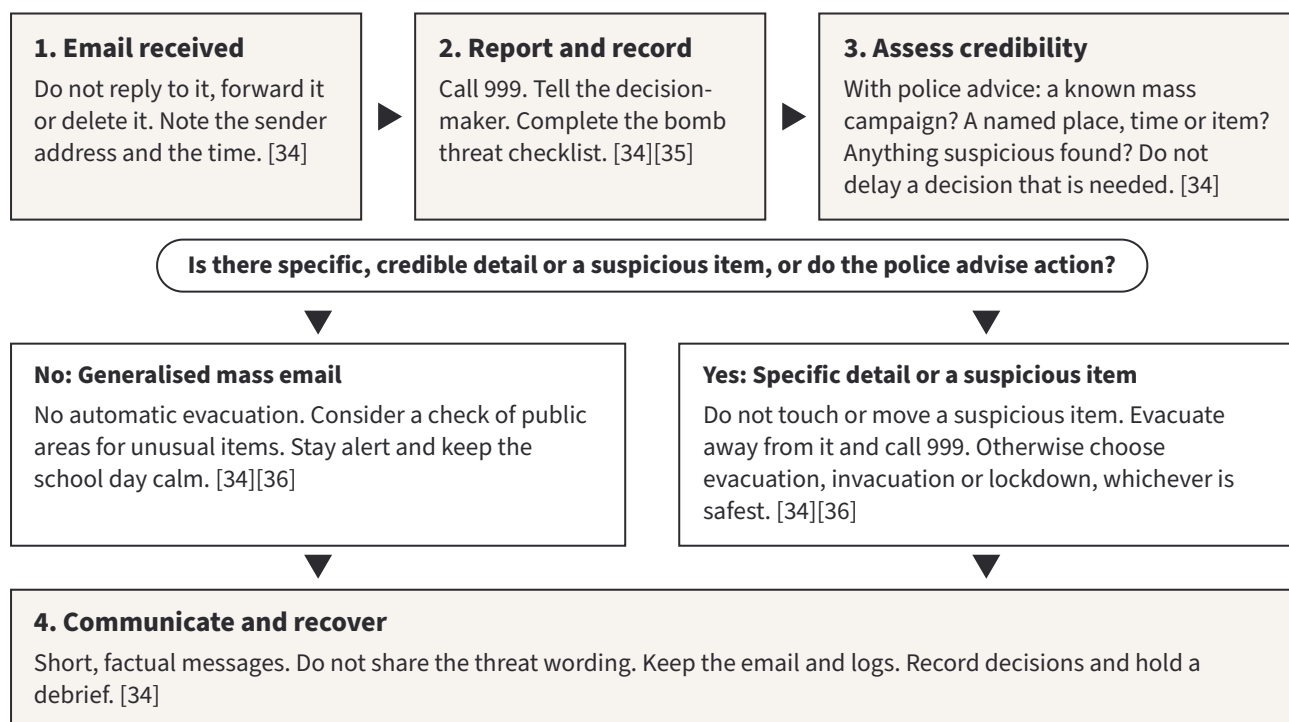


Working with Police Scotland

- Report each threat on 999 with the wording, sender address and time [34].
- Ask for advice on credibility without delaying a decision that is needed [34].
- Report copycat messages on 101, or 999 if there is an immediate risk.
- Agree public messages with the police. Do not publish threat details [34].
- Use common language: JESIP M/ETHANE and the Joint Decision Model [33].

These are OTAS Live Ltd's own recommendations. They support, and do not replace, council procedures and Police Scotland advice.

Figure 4. Responding to an emailed threat: calm checks, not automatic evacuation



Sources: ProtectUK [34][35] and NPSA [36] guidance, summarised by OTAS Live Ltd. This is not a ProtectUK or NPSA figure. Always follow police advice on the day.

Law, guidance and sources

Law or guide	Why it matters here	Ref
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, ss 2 and 3 (GB)	Duties to employees and to others, including pupils	[18][19]
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, regs 3 and 8 (GB)	Risk assessment and procedures for serious and imminent danger	[20][21]
Criminal Law Act 1977, s 51 (E, W and S)	The main offence for bomb hoaxes in Scotland	[23]
Communications Act 2003, s 127 (UK)	Menacing messages, and in Scotland false messages	[25]
Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, s 38	Threatening or abusive behaviour, for local or copycat threats	[26]
Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (UK)	Duties not yet in force. Expected in spring 2027	[37][38]
ProtectUK 'Bomb threats' and 'Bomb threat checklist'	Core guidance for schools that receive a threat	[34][35]
NPSA 'Evacuation, Invacuation and Lockdown Guidance'	Evacuate only when it is clearly the safest option	[36]
Preparing Scotland and JESIP Joint Doctrine	Multi-agency coordination and common language	[32][33]

References

[1] PSNI statement	[16] RTS (Serbia)	[33] JESIP Joint Doctrine 3.1
[2] BBC News NI	[17] Tanjug (Serbia)	[34] ProtectUK 'Bomb threats'
[3] BBC News (Scotland)	[18] HSWA 1974 s 2	[35] ProtectUK 'Bomb threat checklist'
[4] Belfast Telegraph, 11:49	[19] HSWA 1974 s 3	[36] NPSA EIL guidance
[6] STV News	[20] MHSWR 1999 reg 3	[37] TPPA 2025
[8] Glasgow Live: council letter	[21] MHSWR 1999 reg 8	[38] SIA, Martyn's Law guidance
[9] Glasgow Live: Police Scotland	[23] Criminal Law Act 1977 s 51	[41] Education Authority (NI)
[11] The National	[25] Communications Act 2003 s 127	[44] ANSA (Italy)
[13] The Scotsman	[26] CJLSA 2010 s 38	[45] Police Scotland update
[15] Telex (Hungary)	[32] Preparing Scotland	

Reference numbers 1 to 44 follow OTAS-TA-001 v1.1 public version, which lists each in full. Reference 45: Police Scotland website, 20 October 2026. All 45 links checked 26 October 2026. Legislation and GOV.UK content: Open Government Licence v3.0.

Disclaimer. This is an independent open-source summary by OTAS Live Ltd, based on information published by 18:30 UK time on 19 October 2026 and reviewed on 26 October 2026. It is not part of the official response, does not speak for the police, Glasgow City Council, any school or any government, and is not endorsed by any school, council or police force. Police Scotland and Glasgow City Council decide on the safety of schools in Glasgow, and their advice comes first. This is general information, not legal advice. The law is stated as at 26 October 2026, as it applies in Scotland unless stated otherwise. In an emergency, call 999. To report information to Police Scotland, call 101.

About this brief

This brief summarises OTAS-TA-001 v1.1 public version, the full assessment. Reviewed 26 October 2026, no change to the assessment. Next review no later than 26 January 2027, or sooner on an arrest or charge, a new wave, a change in the UK threat level, commencement of the 2025 Act's duties, or a new official statement. Pulled or re-reviewed within hours of any arrest or charge.

Reference	OTAS-TA-001 Brief
Version and status	1.3 public, reviewed 26 October 2026, approved by Kris Dailly 26 October 2026
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Full assessment	OTAS-TA-001 v1.1 public version

Artificial intelligence tools were used in drafting and checking this brief. OTAS Live Ltd reviewed and edited the text and is responsible for it.