

Vertus Charter School
School Safety Plan &
Emergency Response Manual



2023-2024

Basic Building Information

Vertus Charter School

Address: 21 Humboldt Street Rochester, NY 14609

Telephone Number: 585-747-8911

CEO: Julie Locey

Chief Operating Officer: Timothy Hill

Principal: Levi Bennett

Director of Athletics & Physical Education: Richard Maez

Social Worker: James Daniels

Security Guard: Roud Civil

Building Acreage	1
Total number of buildings on site	1
Total number of faculty members	60
Total number of students on roster	260-300

The building has one floor. There are three entrances, one into the Main Lobby and one with a ramp to Admin Offices, and one into the weight room in the back of the building. There are five emergency exits throughout the building.

INTRODUCTION

Vertus Charter School considers emergencies and violent incidents very serious occurrences and responds to these events expeditiously. The School Safety Plan is designed to address the needs of our particular school, our urban location, and the safety of our faculty and students. The State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Vertus supports the SAVE legislation and intends to diligently abide by the recommendations put forth in the legislation. (See Appendix A)

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY

A. A duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons or property caused by air pollution, fire, flood or flood water, storm, epidemic, riot, earthquake, intruder, or other causes. This may be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the site and or School and require the combined efforts of the State or other political subdivisions. School facilities must be prepared to respond to an emergency or traumatic event in an organized and timely manner so that students and faculty can continue to function effectively without additional trauma or the development of additional emergencies.

B. School emergencies can be small and easily managed, or they can be large and difficult to manage. Every school emergency must be managed in a way that ensures the safety of everyone involved. In order to provide a safe and secure teaching and learning environment, personnel must plan for the management of emergency events that cannot be predicted or prevented. This plan is designed to help you do that.

DURING AN EMERGENCY

It is imperative that the Director of Operations and the school faculty are trained to know what steps to take and in what order in a given crisis situation. Planning, training, and drills will help prevent mistakes. It is critical to evaluate the circumstances of an actual event and determine the most appropriate course of action. Some common incidents have been addressed to help in an emergency (See Appendix C). Vertus must conduct an annual Risk Assessment to identify all hazards that pose a risk to the school.

The initial response to all emergencies will be by the School Emergency Response Team; local emergency officials will be notified if necessary. Site personnel and/or local fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies handle most emergencies on site.

INCIDENT CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Director of Operations has the primary responsibility for implementing the site Emergency Operations Plan. Site personnel and/or local fire, EMS and law enforcement agencies handle most emergencies on site.

Incident Chain of Command

Name	Title	Contact Information
Timothy Hill	Director of Operations	(228) 990-6380
Levi Bennett	Principal	(585) 280-3123
Richard Maez	Director of Athletics and PE	(480) 241-3071
James Daniels	Social Worker	(585) 481-4487
Julie Locey	Chief Education Officer	(585) 362-1998

SECTION 1:

GENERAL CONSIDERATION AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The Vertus Charter School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. The CEO initiated the development of this plan and appointed the Director of Operations to ensure the Plan’s implementation and execution.

IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM

The COO is designated as the primary contact for Vertus Charter School. When the COO is away, the Chain of Command is followed:

- Principal: Levi Bennett
- Director of Athletics & PE: Richard Maez
- Social Worker: James Daniels
- Chief Education Officer: Julie Locey

Every member of our faculty is integral to the overall safety of our school. The School Safety Team consists of those listed on the Chain of Command, a parent, student, and select faculty members.

The Building-level School Safety Team is appointed by the Director of Operations and includes representatives of administrators, representatives of faculty, and any other representatives that the Chief Education Officer and Director of Operations deem appropriate. One key function of this team is to identify the types of emergencies and incidents that may occur in our school. This team meets annually to update and ensure that this plan is in compliance with *NYSED*. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed to modify the plan to meet the needs of Vertus. It is recommended that the whole team conducts risk assessments annually.

Name	Title	Contact Information
Timothy Hill	Chief Operating Officer	(228) 990-6380
Levi Bennett	Principal	(585) 280-3123
Richard Maez	Director of Athletics & PE	(480) 241-3071
James Daniels	Social Worker	(585) 481-4487
Deane Schneider	Facilities Manager	(585) 490-0806
Maurice Rice	Lead Preceptor	(585) 363-2120
Norris Woods	College and Career Counselor	(585) 490-2051
Dwayne Snead	Attendance Officer	(585) 857-5994

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The Emergency Response Team will respond to events that occur in and around school grounds. Each team member has a specific role that assists their school to contain, control and bring incidents to a successful resolution. Roles and responsibilities listed in Appendix B.

Name	Position	Contact Information
Timothy Hill	Incident Commander	(228) 990-6380
Levi Bennett	Liaison Officer	(585) 280-3123
Richard Maez	Logistics Section Chief	(480) 241-3071
Yahaira Montero	Scribe	(585) 363-1923
James Daniels	Operations Chief	(585) 481-4487

POST INCIDENT TEAM

The Post-incident Response team will prepare for the recovery phase of the incident. This team includes appropriate school personnel, medical personnel, mental health counselors, and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a serious violent incident or emergency.

Name	Position	Contact Information
Timothy Hill	Chief Operating Officer	(228) 990-6380
Levi Bennett	Principal	(585) 280-3123
Richard Maez	Director of Athletics &PE	(480) 241-3071
James Daniels	Social Worker	(585) 481-4487
William Strowe	School Counselor	(585) 363-1630
Shawn Yarbrough	Family Engagement Coordinator	(585) 481-4660
Julie Locey	Chief Education Officer	(585) 362-1998

CONCEPT OF INFORMATION

The initial response to any emergency will be a process of information gathering by the Director of Operations, in conjunction with members of the Chain of Command for coordination of efforts and communication purposes. Faculty members who are not explicitly members of the Chain of Command will supervise students. Local, county, and state police, fire, and other emergency personnel will be enlisted as deemed necessary by circumstances. The Director of Operations and Director of Student Success are recognized as the persons in charge and are expected to remain at the determined command site; Vertus's main office is located at 21 Humboldt St. Rochester, NY. All communication is to be coordinated through the Director of Operations and/or the Director of Student Success via the school's main number or their Vertus cell phone.

PLAN REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

A summary of this Plan will be available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. In addition to reviewing this plan with our school community, Vertus will hold a public hearing that allows for the participation of school personnel, parents, and any other interested parties. The School Safety Plan will be formally adopted by the School's Board of Trustees after the school's public hearing. Full copies of the School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to New York State Education Department, local law enforcement officials, and State Police within 30 days of adoption. This Plan will be reviewed periodically throughout the year by the School Safety Team. Many of the components of the Plan will be treated as confidential while the non-confidential components will be shared with the public. A required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption. The Plan is an iterative, living document that will be reviewed, modified, and updated to comply with current best practices in school safety. A copy of the Plan will be available at 21 Humboldt St. Rochester, NY 14609.

SECTION II:

RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

PROGRAM INITIATIVES

- Vertus Charter School is a year-round school. Our faculty and families make a commitment to a rigorous academic program that can only be implemented in a safe and disciplined environment.
- Vertus Charter School employs a full time Director of Student Success who promotes positive student behavior, orchestrates the school’s character education program, and handles all serious discipline situations.
- Vertus Charter school employs a full-time Dean of Students, who works with behavior interventionists to support those students that struggle to maintain in a regular classroom setting.
- School Discipline plans and school-wide rituals and routines are all in place to provide prevention and intervention for a safe and healthy learning environment.
- All students are encouraged to approach any faculty whenever they are concerned about their safety, especially if it involves violence or an emergency.

TRAINING, DRILLS, AND EXERCISES

- Faculty will receive the appropriate training in emergency procedures on a regular basis.
- School administrators and faculty receive training on emergency response, de-escalation techniques, and crowd management.
- The Safety Team will conduct building-wide fire/evacuation drills twelve times throughout the school year. Eight before December 1st and four before April 1st. Two additional drills will be conducted during the summer months. Each drill will be followed by a meeting of the Safety Team to assess necessary improvements/alterations. Vertus will periodically conduct a test of the Safety Response plan for Lockdown, Lockout, Shelter-in-place or early dismissal. Transportation and communication procedures will be included in the test.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL SAFETY

- There are security measures at Vertus during the school day. Preceptors are with students at all times. All visitors must announce themselves and be buzzed into the building. All visitors are identified before entering the building and report to the main office to sign in. Fingerprinting and background checks have been conducted on all faculty upon hiring.
- Multiple video cameras are set up throughout campus to monitor activity inside and outside of the facility. The Chain of Command and the appropriate local authorities, if necessary, respond in the event of any alarm being activated.

ADDITIONAL PREVENTION/INTERVENTIONS

1. Student searches every morning (check for weapons, suspicious devices, alcohol/drugs/tobacco)
2. Visitor/Volunteer badges (worn by all visitors in the bldg.)
3. Faculty ID badges visible
4. Doors and windows secured
5. Halls clear unless students are passing
6. The Vertus faculty is familiar with faculty and students who belong in the school. All faculty should question and report those who do not belong or who do not have an escort/visitor badge.

PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

The following preparedness measures should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The School Safety Team will conduct a Risk Assessment once a year. The assessment will be reviewed by the School Safety Team to identify sites of internal and external hazard/risk/threats that may warrant protective actions such as mitigation and planning for emergency responses such as evacuation, locking down, locking out or sheltering the school population.

1. **Employee Preparedness**: At the start of each school year, an Emergency Response Team should be identified and trained. Assignments for Administrators, Teachers, and Preceptors should be determined and assigned.
2. **Fire/Lockdown Drill Procedures**: Each school year, the faculty is given the fire/lockdown drill procedures established for the building. These procedures are in the staff handbook and part of the Emergency Plan. The faculty is expected to review this plan and practice this plan each year with their students.
3. **Floor Plans**: The floor plan for the school indicates exits, fire extinguishers, and the location of emergency equipment and supplies. It also lists the location of all classrooms and office space.
4. **Telephone Tree**: The school telephone tree is used so that faculty can be contacted for an emergency that occurs during non-school hours. (Group Text or Robo-Call)
5. **Employees/students with special needs**: Each year, a list of employees and students who might need special consideration during an emergency are identified. If a child receives special education services, the need for a plan should be indicated on the IEP as a special alert. The SPED Coordinator develops an emergency evacuation plan. Their evacuation plans become part of the portable emergency file.
6. **Practice Drills**: The COO will meet with the entire school faculty at the beginning of the school year to review the school safety plan.
7. **Attendance Procedures**: In the event of an evacuation, each Preceptor will take attendance once they are at the designated area. After attendance is taken the Administrative Assistant or Receptionist notifies the COO of the results of the attendance procedure via email. Students unaccounted for are located by the Emergency Response Team.
8. **Parent Notification**: At the beginning of each school year parents are notified of the school safety plan. They are given assurance a plan is in place and faculty have been trained.
9. **Emergency Contact Numbers**: In the event there is an emergency that results in an evacuation, emergency contact numbers are collected at the beginning of the year and updated as needed. Parents will be notified if an alternate site is necessary for reunification (identification will be necessary).

VITAL EDUCATION AGENCY INFORMATION

- Vertus utilizes “PowerSchool” school information system, designed to store extensive information regarding students and employees. This system tracks our student population, the number of faculty, and key contact information.

EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

- Vertus faculty receive extensive professional development training, which aids them in identifying and addressing any behavior or emotional issues students may face. Regularly scheduled meetings will provide ample room for faculty discussion of any issues as they arise.
- Vertus Charter School employs Preceptors who interface with families to ensure students are equipped to succeed in school. The preceptors act as liaisons to the Principal, to notify him of any potential behavior issues that may affect school safety. The CEO, COO, Principal, Preceptors, and Teachers work collaboratively to inform families of the school’s efforts to maintain a violence-free community.

BUILDING COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITH EMERGENCY OFFICIALS

The building conducts eight fire drills by December 1st, four before April 1st each year and two during the summer quarter. Lockdown, lockout, and shelter-in-place drills are conducted quarterly.

IDENTIFICATION OF SITES OF POTENTIAL EMERGENCIES

Faculty members are informed to be on the alert for potential emergencies and to notify the main office immediately. Upon notification, the decisions are made as to whether or not to activate the Emergency Response Team.

SECTION III:

RESPONSE

RESPONSE

- Emergency keys, copies of the school floor plan and the school's Emergency Response Plan are located in the Main Office. Supplies of water and non-perishable food are also located in the building. Extra radios are housed in the cabinet in the main office. Communication will be by radio, on Channel 2.
- In the event of a Lockdown, all communication by landline (phone), computer or PA will be discontinued after the announcement is made. All communication will be by Cellphone (Email/Text), door to door or emergency personnel using keys to rooms if the situation allows.
- Family reunification will be coordinated by the Principal. Parents, guardians or contacts listed on emergency forms as acceptable to pick up students will be required to show identification in order to have students released. In the event of a Lockdown, Lockout or Shelter-In-Place during the school day, no child will be dismissed until the all clear is given. The same procedures will be used. A copy of students' contact information is on file with the Emergency Plan.
- In the case of an Active Shooter, the Command post will be set up at School 28, located down the street from Vertus.

SECURITY AND CRIME SCENE

- The COO or designee is responsible for crime scene security until relieved by law enforcement officials.
- No items shall be moved, cleaned, or altered without prior approval from the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- Nothing in this section should be interpreted to preclude the rescue and aid of injured persons.

NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS)

- In the event of an emergency, the COO will notify local law enforcement officials via 911 (Rochester Police Department and Rochester Fire Department – 911). Methods of communication within Vertus include: personal contact, telephone, telephone intercom, cellular telephones, email, and two-way radios.
- Notification regarding early dismissals and/or emergency evacuations will be disseminated to the local media via the Director of Student Success. The CEO, COO and the Principal or their designee will manage all other internal and external communications with the media and other outlets. **No employee of Vertus should provide information to the media during or after an emergency unless they have received explicit permission from the Chief Education Officer.** Parents, guardians, and persons in parental relationships will be contacted via telephone by Robo-Call or Vertus Preceptors in the event of an actual emergency.
- The COO or his designee will notify parents in event of a medical emergency or serious injury to a student.

SITUATIONAL RESPONSES

Identification of Potential Emergencies

Vertus Charter School believes that multi hazard emergencies could potentially fall into one of the following three categories:

1. Natural Disasters – hurricanes, severe winter storm, earthquake, foods
2. Man Made Disasters – plane crash, chemical or hazardous material spill
3. School Disasters – acts of violence, terrorism, fire, explosion, flooding, or toxic substance release in school

Identification of Responses to Emergencies

- Early Dismissal – In the event of emergency, students may be dismissed from school early to ensure their safe departure from the building and travel to their homes. While it can be difficult to coordinate transportation for early dismissals with little advance notice, the COO will coordinate with the current Director of RCSD Transportation and/or Rochester Regional Transportation Authority (RTS) to expedite transportation services. Early dismissal will only be utilized as a response to an emergency if it is determined that all students will reach their homes safely.
- Evacuation – It may be appropriate to evacuate the school in an emergency. Evacuation is the optimal response to fire, toxic threats, explosions, some acts of violence, earthquakes or when ordered to do so by law enforcement officials.

- The CEO in conjunction with the COO will determine if the school needs to be evacuated. Preceptors will bring their class rosters and count their students before leaving the building and once they reach the designated safe area. Preceptors will notify the Administrative Assistant immediately if students are missing.
 - The COO will notify local emergency response teams/law enforcement of the emergency. No one will be permitted to re-enter until an “all clear” has been given by the Director of Operations.
- School Closing – School is closed or delayed in opening only when severe weather or other emergency prevents opening the school safely. Depending on the seriousness of a given emergency situation, school may be closed for a designated period of time in order to ensure that the learning environment may be restored to safety. Families and students will be notified of school closings via local media outlets, the Vertus website, Robo-Call, Preceptors, and social media pages.
 - Shelter-in-place – There may be an emergency situation in which it is safer to have students remain in the school past normal school hours rather than evacuating or sending students home. The COO or his designee will give explicit instructions as to where students should be located. Preceptors will be responsible for their learning teams and will be held accountable for all students under their supervision.
 - Alternative Evacuation Plan – In the event of an evacuation, faculty, students and visitors with special needs or disabilities, who are unable to evacuate will report to the nearest safe room. Safe rooms will be designated by the COO and supervised by pre-assigned staff members. Emergency Response Team will report safe room occupants to the emergency responders (Fire Department, etc.) immediately. If an evacuation is absolutely necessary, faculty and students with special needs will have an individual alternative evacuation plan in place. In that event, refer to the alternative evacuation plan which will indicate the assigned staff and the necessary steps, to help the individual evacuate.
 - If Vertus Charter School must evacuate to an alternative site, students would be taken to:

Evacuation	Location	Contact Information
Walking Evacuation:	Henry Hudson school 28' 450 Humboldt ST. Rochester, NY 14620	DOO- (228) 990-6380
Primary Bus Evacuation:	Henry Hudson school 28' 450 Humboldt St. Rochester, NY 14620	DOO- (228) 990-6380

Director of Operations Responsibility Includes Ensuring:

1. A sweep of the designated safe areas prior to the evacuation.
2. Clearance of the building immediately, using appropriate evacuation routes.
3. All known visitors and disabled individuals are assisted out of the building.
4. Designate safe areas as far away from the building as possible, without crossing roadways/driveways used by emergency vehicles (minimum of 500 ft. from building).
5. When determined safe to return by emergency responders; COO will give the all clear.
6. In the event of an offsite evacuation, wait for direction from the Director of Operations or designee.

Response to Acts of Violence

- Vertus Charter School maintains a zero tolerance policy for violence by students, faculty and visitors. Students adhere to the Vertus Student Discipline Code published in the Student Handbook.
- Child Abuse reporting procedures will be followed for all acts of violence committed against students.
- Should an act of violence occur, the CEO and COO will determine the severity of the situation. The immediate threat area will be isolated and the school will be evacuated if necessary. The level of the threat will be determined through information gathering and the COO will contact local law enforcement officials if necessary. The situation will be closely monitored and appropriate adjustments will be carried out as necessary until the threat has dissipated or local law enforcement officials have taken control of the situation.

Response to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats

- Vertus faculty will receive professional development training in de-escalation of potentially dangerous situations. The COO will be notified immediately of all implied or direct threats. The level of the threat will be determined through information gathering and the COO or his designee will contact local law enforcement officials if necessary. The situation will be closely monitored and appropriate adjustments will be carried out as necessary until the threat has dissipated or local law enforcement officials have taken control of the situation.

Responses to Intruder or Other Building Emergency Situation

- The COO will be made aware of an emergency or stranger in the building or on campus. The COO will investigate the situation and determine the extent of the threat.
- If deemed appropriate, the COO will signal faculty, through the use of the telephone and/or intercom to lock down the school.
- Halls and bathrooms are to be cleared of students.

- Students must remain where they are, with their preceptors/teacher at all times.
- Faculty should:
- Lock and close their doors
- Keep students away from windows and doors
- Maintain absolute silence
- The school office contact is responsible to call the authorities for assistance via 911.

Responses to Bomb Threats, Threats of Violence

- The receiver of the threat should attempt to get all information possible from the caller/suspect.
- Receiver of the threat notifies the COO or Principal, who in turn notifies the Chain of Command. In the absence of both the COO or the Principal, the Chain of Command will be utilized. The COO will remain in the office to receive further directions. The Main Office will be designated as the Command Center.
- The COO will have floor plans, spare room keys and all other security materials. The COO will initiate (with available faculty) a visual search of the hallway for any unusual object. Nothing should be touched. If something out-of-the-norm is found, the faculty member will directly report it to the COO.
- According to police authorities urgent evacuation is NOT normally needed.
- Evacuation sites can include the Cafeteria. An external evacuation site and routes to it must be secured before anyone is to move to the area. This mirrors the fire drill procedure of street evacuation.
- If and once the evacuation is authorized, the COO and Principal will lock all doors to the threatened floor. No public access will be allowed.
- Once all sites have been secured, the COO will be notified when to begin the evacuation of the building.
- The COO will announce the evacuation and it will occur in a prescribed, orderly manner.
- Faculty should take attendance information and leave the door open, yet locked. Students should take with them only those possessions that they brought to school.
- Faculty should move students to the evacuation site and remain there for further instructions, as they would in a fire drill.
- The COO along with any chain of command faculty will assist police in a room-by-room search. The COO or his designee should remain in the office to receive information.
- Public communication about the bomb threat will come from the Principal as soon as possible after the conclusion of the incident
- A letter will be sent home (and mailed later) with the students to explain the event.

- The faculty will receive an email of this letter and, if appropriate, information gained during the threat. Some information may not be divulged due to the needs of the law enforcement agencies and their pending investigation.
- Any information sought by the media will be directed to and given out through the Director of Student Success.

Hazardous Chemical/Substance Spill

- The COO (or other designees) notifies the chain of command of the situation.
- If warranted, the decision to evacuate the building will be done so by sounding the fire alarm. Before an evacuation is conducted, all routes out of the building must be determined to be safe and away from the spill area.
- The Rochester Fire Department will be immediately notified if deemed a problem beyond the reach and expertise of the Safety Team.

Fire

- The school has fire drill procedures posted in every room, and drills are tested and practiced 12 times annually; additional drills for the summer months. In almost all instances, fire alarms will sound, as a recognized symbol necessitating evacuation. All faculty members are involved in assisting children out of the building and to designated stations on surrounding streets. Emergency response faculty helps secure the building and leave last. The goal of the school is to evacuate in less than 2 minutes.

Communicable Diseases

- If the school nursing faculty finds that a student shows symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of others in the school, the student should be excluded from the school and sent home immediately in a safe and proper conveyance. The school nurse shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law.
- Following absence because of illness or from an unknown cause, the school nurse may examine each student returning to school in addition to a letter of clearance from a local public health officer, a duly licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- The nurse may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees, school buildings and premises as, in their discretion, they may deem necessary to protect the health of the students and faculty.

RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

The Director of Operations and the Director of Student Success and/or their designee will determine what outside agencies to contact given the situation. In emergencies, 911 will be called and police and/or fire departments will dispatch.

Public Safety Agencies	Number
General Emergency	911
Rochester Police Department	911
Rochester Fire Department	911
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
American Red Cross	1-800-448-3543

Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials

- Upon approval of the Vertus Charter School Safety Plan by the State Education Department (SED), members of the Chain of Command will meet with appropriate officials within Rochester to disseminate the plan. The COO will contact the highest-ranking local government official to seek advice and assistance. The school will identify resources for an emergency from the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Rochester Police and Fire Departments.

Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School Resources and Manpower during Emergencies: Protective Action Options

- Should an emergency occur at Vertus Charter School, the COO will gather the School Safety Team to formulate an appropriate plan of action following the procedures outlined earlier in this document for confronting and rectifying specific emergencies.
- The COO or their designee may declare a school emergency and implement the procedures set forth in this document. The Main Office shall become the Command Center and the Chain of Command shall report to the Command Center. The COO shall remain in charge until local law enforcement or emergency response personnel are on the scene and take command of the situation. The following steps will occur in an actual emergency:
 - Take control once informed of emergency situation
 - Gather information and make appropriate decisions
 - Order evacuation if necessary
 - Contact appropriate law enforcement authorities as necessary
 - Turn control of emergency situations over to law enforcement as required
 - Test the emergency response procedures on an annual basis
 - Meet with local government official to seek advice and assistance

SECTION IV: RECOVERY

SCHOOL SUPPORT

Vertus will support its faculty members and students in dealing with an emergency by providing adequate training regarding the identification and prevention of violence as well as training in appropriate responses. The COO and Safety Team will review the emergency response procedures for needed modifications and alterations based upon feedback from debriefing sessions.

DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Should an emergency occur, Vertus will enlist the support of community mental health resources for guidance and assistance.

RECOVERY

The Family Resource Coordinator and Lead school counselor has developed the following procedures for dealing with post-incident response:

Short term

- Mental health counseling (students and faculty)
- Building security
- Facility restoration
- Post-incident response critique
- Other

Long term

- Mental Health counseling (monitor for post-traumatic stress behavior)
- Mitigation (to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and impact if it does occur again)
- Building security: The Director of Admissions and Public Relations or his designee will survey building inside and out to ensure the building is safe for occupancy. The School Leader will coordinate with the landlord to ensure the building and its facilities are in operating order.
- The School Leader will notify the insurance carrier

The Emergency Response Team will meet the day following the incident to debrief.

Any Long Term impact of an incident that cannot be managed in-house with the teams will request assistance from outside agencies.

Appendix A:

NYS SAVE Requirements and NIMS Requirements

Vertus Charter School, represented by CEO Julie Locey , and the Vertus Board of Trustees, supports New York State SAVE Legislation and NIMS regulations for emergency planning in schools as follows:

SAVE Legislation for Building Level Emergency Response Plans

The development of school safety plans is a framework for the School to use in managing its initiatives for creating a safe and orderly school environment in which learning can take place. Planning teams should begin their work with a thorough review of the Education Law §2801-a, and 8 NYCRR §155.17, as well as other relevant laws and regulations. Every Board of Education must adopt a Building-Level Emergency Response Plan for each building in the School. The plans must be reviewed and updated annually by July 1st of each year. A school building emergency response plan shall be developed by the Building-Level School Safety

Team and shall include the following elements:

- I. Policies and procedures for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, other school personnel ,and visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident or another emergency which may occur before, during or after school hours, which shall include the description of plans of action for evacuation and sheltering, evacuation routes and shelter sites, and procedures for addressing medical needs, transportation and emergency notification to persons in parental relation to a student;
- II. Designation of an emergency response team, other appropriate incident response teams, and a post-incident response team;
- III. Procedures for assuring that crisis response, fire and law enforcement officials have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics or other maps of the school interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area;
- IV. Establishment of internal and external communication systems in emergencies;
- V. Definition of the chain of command in a manner consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS);
- VI. Coordination of the school safety plan with the statewide plan for disaster mental health services to assure that the school has access to Federal, State and local mental health resources in the event of a violent incident;
- VII. Procedures for an annual review and the conduct of drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials;
- VIII. Policies and procedures for securing and restricting access to the crime scene in order to preserve evidence in cases of violent crimes on school property;
- IX. Certain information about each educational agency located in the School, including information on school population, number of faculty, transportation needs and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such agency.

A summary of the Building-level Emergency Response Plans must be made available for public comment at least thirty days prior to their adoption by the School Board. Since Building-level plans are confidential and are not subject to disclosure under article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, only a summary of a building-level plan can be made available for public comment. The School Board may adopt the plans only after at least one public hearing has been held which provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and other interested parties.

A copy of each Building-level Emergency Response Plan and any amendments must be filed with appropriate local law enforcement officials and with the State Police within thirty days of adoption.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Requirements

All K-12 schools, suburban, and rural; large and small, receiving Federal preparedness monies through the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and/or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are required to support the implementation of NIMS. Because all schools are integral components of every community and its government, DHS and ED recommend all schools, regardless of whether they are recipients of Federal preparedness funds, implement NIMS.

NIMS was established March 1, 2004, following the Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) Management of Domestic Incidents. HSPD-5 requires NIMS adoption and implementation by all local jurisdictional levels and functional disciplines as well as across the full spectrum of potential incidents and hazard scenarios. NIMS defines local jurisdictions as including schools and Schools. Although schools are not traditional response organizations, they have immediate and critical roles in response such as providing command and management directives until local first responders arrive.

Lessons learned from recent school incidents show that school officials and first responders must both be knowledgeable and be trained to implement pre-established practices and procedures. If a school-based incident occurs, school personnel are the immediate responders — they provide first-aid, notify community response partners, and give command and management directives — all in advance of first response arrival. NIMS is suitable for all schools to implement throughout all phases of school emergency management: 1) Prevention-Mitigation; 2) Preparedness; 3) Response; and 4) Recovery.

Steps to Implementing NIMS:

- Documenting NIMS adoption at the school and campus community level;
- Creating a strategy and a timeline for fulfilling each of the activities outlined in NIMS
- Implementation Activities For Schools;
- Documenting the use of NIMS and its components in all school emergency management activities and documents;
- Scheduling and convening ongoing meetings with partners;
- Working closely with community partners to develop procedures, provide training, conduct exercises, and review plans;

- Ensuring training, in coordination with community partners, is provided to key personnel with critical roles in emergency management (i.e., command-level officers and team members); and
- Reviewing individual school site plans with partners and ensuring NIMS components are incorporated—training, joint emergency exercises, schedules for continual updates to the plan, interoperability.
- Using ICS to manage all related activities before, during, and after school and events to provide for the safety and well-being of attendees.
- Determining, designating, and documenting in advance key personnel and their roles and responsibilities within ICS, including the chain of command;
Determining, designating, and documenting back-ups to personnel with leadership positions within ICS;
- Integrating common operating and response procedures from all response partners, including public health, mental health, fire, and law enforcement departments and agencies;
- Integrating ICS into functional and system-wide emergency operations policies, plans, and procedures;
- Ensuring compatibility of communication devices internally and externally with local responders; and Providing joint training opportunities to support ICS.
- Ensuring interoperability of communication devices with partners and local government;
- Integrating and documenting procedures from all response partners, including public health, mental health, fire, and law enforcement departments and agencies;
- Participating in MACS exercises and debriefings, and integrating determined modifications to plans; and
- Writing partnerships agreements that detail each partner’s roles and responsibilities, procedures and protocols, and transfer of command.

Appendix B

Incident Commander: The Incident Commander is solely responsible for emergency/disaster operations and shall remain at the Command Post to observe and direct all operations. It is imperative to ensure the safety of students, staff, and others on campus.
Lead by example: your behavior sets the tone for staff and students.

Scribe: Reports to the Incident Commander, open and maintain a position log maintaining all required records and documentation to support the history of the emergency or disaster.

Liaison Officer: The Liaison Officer serves as the point of contact for incoming agencies and organizations that are helping support the operation. The Liaison Officer has the responsibility for all interaction between the media and who coordinates the release of information on the incident situation and response efforts to the media.

Operations Chief: The Operations Section Chief supervises the performance of all incident tactical operations.

Logistics Section Chief: A Logistics Section Chief is responsible for providing facilities, services, and material support for the incident, including all essential services and support functions needed for the incident management team to conduct effective operations. (This may include services such as meals and equipment repair).