

# Vertus Charter School



School Safety Plan

&

Emergency Response Manual

2025-2026

# **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)

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## **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.

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## **DURING AN EMERGENCY**

It is imperative that the school faculty is 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. 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.

# Basic Building Information

## School Contact Information

**Legal Name:** Vertus Charter School

**Address:** 21 Humboldt Street, Rochester, NY 14609

**Telephone Number:** (585) 747-8911

### Chief Executive Officer (CEO):

Julie Locey

**Email:** jlocey@vertusschool.org

### Principal:

Levi Bennett

**Email:** lbennett@vertusschool.org

Building Acreage	1
Total number of buildings on site	1
Total number of faculty members	74
Total number of students on roster	340-360

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.

# **SECTION 1: PLANNING GUIDELINES**

## **PURPOSE**

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

## **IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM**

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, a student, and select faculty members. The Building-level School Safety Team is appointed by the Chief Executive Officer and includes representatives of administrators, representatives of faculty, and any other representatives that the Chief Education Officer deems 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 conduct risk assessments annually.

<b>INCIDENT CHAIN OF COMMAND</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Chief Executive Officer	Julie Locey	585-362-1998
Principal	Levi Bennett	585-414-6178
Assistant Principal	Benjamin Kadar	585-481-4491
Assistant Principal	Scott Rogerson	585-363-3450
Director of Facilities & Athletics	Richard Maez	480-241-3071
Social Worker	James Daniels	585-481-4487

## **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 in containing, controlling, and bringing incidents to a successful resolution. Roles and responsibilities are listed in Appendix B.

Title	Name	Contact Information
Incident Commander	Richard Maez	480-241-3071
Liaison Officer	Levi Bennett	585-414-6178
Logistics Section Chief	Benjamin Kadar	585-481-4491
Scribe	Scott Rogerson	585-363-3450
Operations Chief	Julie Locey	585-362-1998

## **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.

Title	Name	Contact Information
Principal	Levi Bennett	585-414-6178
Assistant Principal	Benjamin Kadar	585-481-4491
Assistant Principal	Scott Rogerson	585-363-3450
Director of Facilities & Athletics	Richard Maez	480-241-3071
Social Worker	James Daniels	585-481-4487
School Counselor	Norris Woods	585-490-2051
Chief Executive Officer	Julie Locey	585-362-1998

## **CONCEPT OF INFORMATION**

The initial response to any emergency will be a process of information gathering by the Director of Facilities and Principal, 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 CEO, Director of Facilities, and Principal 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 Facilities and/or the Principal 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. Full copies of the School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the 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**

## **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 Principal 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 Assistant Principal, who works with behavior interventionists to support those students who 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 member 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.
- 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.

## 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 hazards/risks/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.

<b>Preparedness Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1. Employee Preparedness</b>	The Emergency Response Team is identified and trained at the start of the year. Roles for Administrators, Teachers, and Preceptors are assigned.
<b>2. Fire/Lockdown Drill Procedures</b>	Faculty receive procedures annually (in the handbook and plan). Expected to review and practice with students.
<b>3. Floor Plans</b>	Floor plans indicate exits, fire extinguishers, emergency supplies, and all room locations.
<b>4. Telephone Tree</b>	Used for contacting faculty during off-hours emergencies (via Group Text or Robo-Call).
<b>5. Employees/Students with Special Needs</b>	A list of individuals requiring special consideration is created. The SPED Coordinator creates evacuation plans, which are stored in the emergency file.
<b>6. Practice Drills</b>	DOF (Director of Facilities) meets with faculty at the start of the year to review the safety plan.
<b>7. Attendance Procedures</b>	During evacuations, Preceptors take attendance. Admin Assistant/Receptionist emails results to DOF. The Emergency Team locates unaccounted students.
<b>8. Parent Notification</b>	Parents are informed at the start of the year that a plan is in place and staff are trained.
<b>9. Emergency Contact Numbers</b>	Contact numbers are collected/updated annually. Used for emergency notifications and reunification. PowerSchool stores all key information.

## **ADDITIONAL PREVENTION/INTERVENTIONS**

- Student searches every morning (check for weapons, suspicious devices, alcohol/drugs/tobacco)
- Visitor/Volunteer badges (worn by all visitors in the building.)
- Faculty ID badges are visible
- Doors and windows secured
- Halls are clear unless students are passing
- 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.

## **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, Principal, Assistant Principals, 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

- [REDACTED]. 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 cell phone (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 the 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 [REDACTED].

## SECURITY AND CRIME SCENE

- The DOF 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 DOF 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 Principal. The CEO 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 Executive 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 DOF, Principal, or their designee will notify parents in the 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:

- Natural Disasters – hurricanes, severe winter storms, earthquakes, floods
- Man-made disasters – plane crash, chemical or hazardous material spill
- 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 an emergency, students may be dismissed early to ensure safe travel home.
- The Director of Facilities (DOF) will coordinate with the Director of RCSD Transportation and/or the Rochester Regional Transportation Authority (RTS) to arrange transportation.
- Early dismissal will only occur if it is determined that all students can return home safely.

#### Evacuation

- Evacuation may be necessary in response to fire, toxic threats, explosions, acts of violence, earthquakes, or law enforcement orders.
- The CEO, DOF, and Principal will determine whether evacuation is required.
- Preceptors will bring rosters, take attendance before leaving the building, and re-check attendance at the safe area.
- Missing students must be reported immediately to the Administrative Assistant.

- The DOF will notify emergency services and grant re-entry only after an official “all clear.”

School Closing

- School may be closed or delayed due to severe weather or emergencies.
- Notifications will be sent through local media, the Vertus website, Robo-Call, Preceptors, and social media.
- Closures are enacted to restore safety to the learning environment.

Shelter-in-Place

- Used when it is safer for students to remain inside the school rather than evacuate.
- The DOF or designee will provide instructions on location and supervision.
- Preceptors are responsible for supervising and accounting for their students.

**Alternative Evacuation Plan**

- For those with special needs or disabilities, designated safe rooms will be assigned and supervised by trained staff.
- The Emergency Response Team will report safe room occupants to emergency responders.
- Individual alternative evacuation plans will be followed, detailing the staff and steps necessary to assist in safe evacuation.

If Vertus Charter School must evacuate to an alternative site, students would be taken to:

Evacuation	Location	Contact Information
Walking Evacuation:	[REDACTED]	
Primary Bus Evacuation:	[REDACTED]	

### **Director of Facilities' Responsibilities Include Ensuring:**

1. Conduct a sweep of designated safe areas prior to evacuation.
2. Clear the building immediately using appropriate evacuation routes.
3. Assist all known visitors and individuals with disabilities in exiting the building.
4. Designate safe areas at least 500 feet from the building, avoiding roadways used by emergency vehicles.
5. Once emergency responders deem it safe, the Director of Facilities will give the all-clear to re-enter.
6. In the event of an offsite evacuation, wait for direction from the Director of Facilities or designee.

### **Response to Acts of Violence**

- Vertus Charter School enforces a zero-tolerance policy for violence committed by students, faculty, or visitors. All students are expected to follow the Vertus Student Discipline Code as outlined in the Student Handbook.
- Child abuse reporting procedures will be strictly followed for any acts of violence committed against students.
- If an act of violence occurs:
  - The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Principal, and Director of Facilities (DOF) will assess the severity of the situation.
  - The immediate threat area will be isolated, and the school may be evacuated if necessary.
  - The Principal or his designee will gather information to determine the level of the threat and notify local law enforcement as appropriate.
  - The situation will be closely monitored, and adjustments will be made as needed until the threat has been resolved or authorities assume control.

### **Response to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats**

- Vertus faculty will receive professional development training in the de-escalation of potentially dangerous situations. The Principal will be notified immediately of all implied or direct threats. The level of the threat will be determined through information gathering, and the Principal 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 Director of Facilities (DOF) will be immediately notified of any emergency or report of a stranger on campus.
- The DOF will assess the threat and determine the appropriate response.
- If necessary, the DOF will initiate a school lockdown using the intercom or telephone system.

### **During Lockdown:**

- Halls and bathrooms must be cleared of all students.
- Students must remain in their current location with their preceptor or teacher.
- Faculty should:
  - Lock and close classroom doors.
  - Keep students away from windows and doors.
  - Maintain absolute silence.
- The designated school office contact will call 911 to request emergency assistance.

### **Responses to Bomb Threats, Threats of Violence**

- The staff member who receives the threat should attempt to gather as much information as possible from the caller/suspect.
- The threat must be reported immediately to the Director of Facilities (DOF) or Principal. If both are unavailable, the Chain of Command is to be followed.
- The DOF remains in the Main Office, which becomes the designated Command Center, to receive further instructions.
- The DOF will have access to floor plans, spare keys, and other security materials.
- A visual search of hallways will be conducted by available faculty under the DOF's direction. No object should be touched. Any unusual item must be reported directly to the DOF.

- According to police guidance, urgent evacuation is typically not required.
- Internal evacuation sites, such as the cafeteria, may be used if secured. External evacuation routes must also be secured before movement begins.
- If evacuation is authorized:
  - The DOF and Principal will lock down all access to the threatened area.
  - No public access will be allowed until cleared.
  - Once all areas are secure, the DOF will initiate an orderly evacuation.
- Faculty responsibilities during evacuation:
  - Bring attendance sheets and account for all students.
  - Leave classroom doors open but locked.
  - Ensure students only bring the belongings they arrived with.
  - Escort students to the designated evacuation site and await further instructions.
- The DOF and Chain of Command will assist law enforcement in conducting a room-by-room search.
- The DOF or designee remains in the office to coordinate and receive updates.
- All public communication about the incident will be handled by the Principal.
- A letter will be sent home (and mailed if necessary) to explain the situation to families.
- Faculty will receive an email copy of the letter and, when appropriate, any additional updates. Certain information may be withheld due to an active investigation.
- All media inquiries will be directed to the Principal. No other staff member is permitted to speak to the media.

### **Hazardous Chemical/Substance Spill Response**

- The Director of Facilities(DOF) or designee will notify the Chain of Command immediately.

- If evacuation is necessary, the fire alarm will be sounded—but only after all exit routes have been deemed safe and clear of contamination.
- If the situation is beyond the capabilities of the internal Safety Team, the Rochester Fire Department will be contacted immediately for assistance.

### **Fire Response Protocol**

- Fire drill procedures are posted in every room.
- The school conducts 12 fire drills annually, with additional drills in the summer session.
- Fire alarms will sound to indicate the need to evacuate.
- All faculty are responsible for safely escorting students out of the building to designated stations on surrounding streets.
- Emergency response faculty secure the building and are the last to leave.
- The goal is to complete the evacuation within 2 minutes.

### **Communicable Disease Protocol**

- If a student shows symptoms of a reportable communicable or infectious disease, the school nurse will immediately send the student home in a safe and proper manner.
- The CEO or their designee will also notify the local public health agency per state public health law.
- Upon return, students may be examined by the school nurse and must provide a letter of clearance from a public health officer, licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- The nurse has the discretion to evaluate staff, students, and facilities to ensure the ongoing health and safety of the school community.

## RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

### Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

- The Director of Facilities and the Principal 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.

<b>Public Safety Agencies</b>	<b>Number</b>
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 DOF 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

In the event of an emergency at Vertus Charter School:

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will assemble the School Safety Team to develop and implement an appropriate response plan based on procedures outlined in this document.
- The CEO, DOF, or designee may officially declare a school emergency and activate emergency procedures.
- The Main Office will be designated as the Command Center, and members of the Chain of Command will report there immediately.

- The DOF will remain in charge until local law enforcement or emergency response personnel arrive and assume control.

**Key Actions During an Emergency:**

- Take control upon notification of the emergency.
- Gather relevant information and make timely, informed decisions.
- Order evacuation if deemed necessary.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement or emergency services as required.
- Relinquish control to emergency responders once they arrive on scene.
- Conduct annual testing of emergency procedures.
- Coordinate with local government officials to seek guidance and assistance as needed.

# **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 CEO 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 Social Worker and Lead school counselor have 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 DOF or his designee will survey the building inside and out to ensure the building is safe for occupancy and will coordinate with the landlord to ensure the building and its facilities are in operating order.
- The CEO 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 by the teams will require assistance from outside agencies.

# Appendix A:

Vertus Charter School, represented by CEO Julie Locey, and the Vertus Board of Trustees, support 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 must adopt a Building-Level Emergency Response Plan for each building in the School. The plans must be reviewed and updated annually by September 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.

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. 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 that all schools, regardless of whether they are recipients of Federal preparedness funds, implement NIMS.

NIMS was established on 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 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:**

Vertus Charter School will implement the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as follows:

- Document NIMS adoption at both the school and campus community levels.
- Develop a strategy and timeline for completing all NIMS Implementation Activities for Schools.
- Incorporate NIMS components into all school emergency management activities, procedures, and documentation.

- Hold regular meetings with community partners to coordinate preparedness efforts.
- Collaborate with community partners to:
  - Develop emergency procedures
  - Provide joint training opportunities
  - Conduct coordinated emergency exercises
  - Review and update plans regularly
- Ensure training is provided—alongside partners—for key personnel with critical emergency management roles (e.g., command-level officers, team leaders).
- Review school site plans with partners to confirm inclusion of NIMS components, such as:
  - Training protocols
  - Emergency exercise schedules
  - Plan update timelines
  - Communication and operational interoperability
- Utilize the Incident Command System (ICS) to manage all events and emergencies before, during, and after they occur.
- Determine and document in advance:
  - Key personnel and their ICS roles
  - Chain of command
  - Back-ups for all leadership positions within ICS
- Integrate shared response procedures from all key partners including:
  - Public health departments
  - Mental health services
  - Fire departments
  - Law enforcement agencies

- Embed ICS into all emergency operations policies, plans, and procedures at the system-wide level.
- Ensure communication device compatibility, both internally and with local emergency responders.
- Ensure interoperability of communication systems with all emergency response partners.
- Participate in MACS (Multi-Agency Coordination System) exercises and debriefings; apply lessons learned to improve emergency protocols.
- Develop partnership agreements that outline:
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Communication protocols
  - Procedures for command transitions

# 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).