

Veritas Academy

Emergency Response Handbook

Staff Plan and Procedures

Safety First

The plans and procedures outlined below are designed to serve as an immediate plan for dealing with critical incidents until police or other emergency personnel arrive. If there is a crisis in the building, please consult this plan and follow the appropriate instructions. Remember the safety of students, staff, and visitors are our top priority during any emergency situation.

Building Security

1. Always use your keycard to enter, never unlock exterior doors with a physical key.
2. Never prop doors open unattended.
3. Do not let anybody in the building without first identifying the reason for their visit. Guide visitors to the office for assistance.
4. Make sure doors close properly when entering and exiting – ensure that nobody slips in after you.
5. If you notice suspicious activity on campus notify the office.

General Instructions

1. Please confirm that your Motorola Handheld Radio is charged, on, with volume up every morning.
2. For ALL drills/emergencies please take your radio and personal cell phone with you –have it on your person.
3. ALWAYS Stay calm. Trust God. The students will follow your lead. Hysterics/Panic on the part of adults and/or students could lead to tragedy.
4. Count your students multiple times. The Headmaster and/or office staff will do a sweep of the building to look for any unaccounted-for students and/or adults.

Codes

Code 1 = Intruder (Escape/Lockdown)

Code 2 = Severe Weather

Code 3 = Fire

Fire – Code 3

Evacuate the building via your designated route (see map in classroom), walk quickly, silently, and line up on front lawn of the IPC Sanctuary. Wait to be counted.

Teachers:

- Evacuate the building via your designated route (see map in classroom). Use alternate escape routes if the regular route is blocked or there is a safety hazard. Walk quickly, silently, and line up on the front lawn of the IPC Sanctuary.

- Close the classroom door and turn out the lights upon exiting confirming all students and personnel are out of the classroom.
- Take attendance at the assembly area after being evacuated. Notify office staff of missing students/staff.
- Keep the class together and wait for further instructions. The headmaster will dismiss when the school is safe to re-enter.

Severe Weather – Code 2

Leave the classroom quickly, silently, and go to designated area of the building. PreK-6th in Axson Building go to the Fellowship Hall. 7th-8th in Admin Building go to the interior east wall of the classrooms, 9th-12th in Whitaker Building go to basement. Students should stay away from exterior windows and take cover under a table or desk if possible. Students should kneel and bend face down covering their heads with their arms and hands.

Intruder – Code 1

Code 1 INTRUDER ESCAPE

- Leave the building through safest exit (away from intruder location if known), quickly, silently, go to nearest square or designated location. Immediately alert Headmaster/Operations Director of missing students or extra students.
- PreK -Escape to Orleans Square via the Lane door OR to corner of Oglethorpe Ave and Barnard via Oglethorpe Ave exit.
- K & 1st Grade -Escape to Chippewa Square via 'Buzzer' door OR to Orleans Square via Lane door.
- 2nd-6th - Escape to Orleans Square via the Lane door OR to corner of Oglethorpe Ave and Barnard via Oglethorpe Ave exit.
- 7th-8th – Escape to Chippewa Square via Hull Street door exit OR to Orleans Square via 7th grade door exit to Lane
- 9th-12th – Escape to Orleans Square via Whitaker Street door exit OR to corner of Oglethorpe Ave and Barnard via Lane door exit.
- ALL wait at gathering location until you receive an "All Clear" text or further instructions.
- Please NOTE that in the event of an actual intruder the decision to escape, lockdown, or fight must be made by the teacher.

Code 1 INTRUDER LOCKDOWN

- Lock/secure classroom or hiding room door. Turn off lights. Cover windows if possible.
- Move students to safe location of room away from doors and windows. Text Headmaster/Operations Director about extra or missing children.
- Be silent, wait until you receive an "All Clear" text or further instructions. Make sure your phone is on silent.
- All Clear Code – "God bless Veritas Academy" This will be used with any verbal communication indicating a trusted source of an all-clear message. It will also be used by emergency responders needing to enter a classroom. If a verbal all-clear message is given and does not include the all clear code it should be ignored. Anybody trying to enter a classroom should be asked for the All Clear Code. If the person does not respond "God bless Veritas Academy" the request to enter should be ignored.

A.L.I.C.E. -Responding to Intruders and Active Shooters

A. ALERT is your first notification of danger.

ALERT is when you first become aware of a threat. The sooner you understand that you are in danger, the sooner you can save the students and yourself. A speedy response is critical. Seconds count.

Alert is overcoming denial, recognizing the signs of danger, and receiving notifications about the danger from others. Alerts should be accepted, taken seriously, and help you to make survival decisions based on your circumstances.

L. Lockdown your room –get behind locked doors out of sight.

Lock the doors. Turn off the lights. Get out of sight. Remain silent. If EVACUATION is not a safe option, barricade entry points into your room to create a secure area. Prepare to EVACUATE or COUNTER if needed.

Lockdown is not passive hiding. It is active sheltering in a secure place while you prepare for next steps toward evacuation or countering the threat.

I. Inform your leaders. Communicate the violent intruder’s location and direction in real time.

The purpose of **INFORM** is to communicate information in as real time as possible if it is safe to do so. Armed intruder situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly, which means that ongoing, real-time information is key to making effective survival decisions. Information should always be clear, direct and in plain language, not using codes. If the shooter is known to be in an isolated section of a building, occupants in other areas/buildings can safely evacuate while those in direct danger can perform enhanced lockdown and prepare to counter.

C. Counter. Create Noise, Movement, Distance and Distraction with the intent of reducing the shooter’s ability to shoot accurately. Counter is NOT fighting.

Actively confronting a violent intruder is NOT the best method for ensuring the safety of those involved. Counter is a strategy of last resort. Counter focuses on actions that create noise, movement, distance, and distraction with the intent of reducing the shooter’s ability to shoot accurately. Creating a dynamic environment decreases the shooter’s chance of hitting a target and can provide the precious seconds needed to evacuate.

E. Evacuate. When safe to do so, remove your students from the danger zone.

Evacuating to a safe area takes people out of harm’s way and hopefully prevents students and staff from having to come into any contact with the shooter.

Medical Emergency

Teacher/Office Staff:

- Assess the situation. Make sure the situation is safe for you to approach. Examples of danger include but are not limited to: live electric wires, gas leak, building damage, animal threat.
- If needed call or have someone call 911. Be prepared to provide the school name and address, exact location (floor, room number); describe illness or type of injury; and age of victim(s).
- Inform headmaster/office.
- Protect self against contact with body fluids (blood-borne pathogens).
- Administer first aid. First aid supplies are in the school office.
- Comfort and reassure the victim. Do Not Move the sick or injured unless the scene is unsafe.
- If the victim is not breathing or there is no pulse, ask someone to retrieve the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and begin Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or Rescue Breathing until the AED is ready to use.
- AEDs are located in the hallway/storage area in front of the sanctuary and in the kitchen.

Intruder/Suspicious or Unknown Person

Suspicious Campus Activity – when a suspicious person is outdoors on campus property:

- Notify the office.
- Do not engage with the person.
- Immediately get students inside the building.

Intruder – When an unauthorized person enters a school building:

- Notify the office.
- Ask another staff person to accompany you before approaching guest/intruder.
- Greet guest/intruder and identify yourself.
- Ask guest/intruder the purpose of his/her visit.
- Inform guest/intruder that all visitors must register in the office.
- If intruder's purpose is not legitimate, ask him/her to leave. Accompany intruder to exit.

If Intruder refuses to leave:

- Warn intruder of consequences for staying on school property.
- Notify police and office if intruder still refuses to leave. Give police full description. (Keep intruder unaware of call for help if possible.)
- Walk away from intruder if he/she indicates a potential for violence. Be aware of intruder's actions at this time (where she/he is located in school, whether he/she is carrying a weapon or package, etc.)
- Maintain visual contact with intruder from a safe distance.
- Never attempt to physically remove the stranger from the premises.

Imminent Danger

- If the situation warrants immediate action, turn your radio to the ALL CALL channel and call code 1 Intruder - give location and details if possible. Proceed to escape or lockdown.

Reunification Site:

Civic Center Parking Lot

Parents will be notified via Alma Emergency Alert. Students will remain with their teacher until dismissed to a parent by an administrator or office staff.

Crisis Contact Phone Numbers

EMERGENCY	Police/Fire Department/Ambulance	911
Veritas Academy	Office	912-238-1222
Veritas Academy	Headmaster, Mr. Taylor	912-704-8822
Veritas Academy	Operations Director, Mrs. Knofczynski	605-695-1215
Independent Presbyterian Church	Main Office	912-236-3346
Independent Presbyterian Church	Josh Espinosa, Director of Administration	803-413-5674
Savannah Chatham County Police	Non-Emergency	912-652-6500
Savannah Chatham County Police	Habersham St. Station	912-651-6675
Savannah Chatham County Emergency Services		912-354-1011
Savannah Fire Rescue	Oglethorpe Ave. Station	912-651-6754
Georgia Power		888-660-5890
Poison Control		800-222-1222

Building Addresses

Axson Building	25 W. Oglethorpe Lane
Whitaker Building	210 Whitaker Street
Administration Building	207 Bull Street