

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Chaos At Charlotte Amalie High As Child Falls Off Balcony, Pregnant Woman Beaten And Another Struck With Fire Extinguisher

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ST. THOMAS -- Students at the Charlotte Amalie High School said that they were having lunch when an code red lockdown alert started blaring through the intercom system. The person speaking through the machine commanded students to get to their classes, or stay inside whatever building they were in.

Confused, some students started following others who were racing towards a fight. Then, according to multiple students, a young man involved in a skirmish was seen falling from a balcony from the school's second floor. Hurt and stunned by the fall, he was not

immediately aware of his surroundings or what had happened.

It looked like a gang fight, multiple students stated. Ostensibly, students from warring housing communities here brought their brawl to school, disrupting an otherwise normal day of learning at this island's biggest learning institution.

The fights -- no less than five, according to student reports -- continued, as girls were seen beating on a pregnant woman (not clear if she was a student, parent or teacher), who remained curled up on the ground protecting her stomach from a barrage of punches. And in a separate fight, a girl was struck with a fire extinguisher, according to multiple student accounts.

Students were being trampled, one student said. Some wondered where were the monitors, who did not arrive on time to quell the fights before the damage had been done. And it remains unclear what exactly triggered the alleged gang skirmishes, but it was bad enough to cause a strong police presence and an ambulance to arrive at the school, and a press release issued by the Department of Education on Tuesday said the fight started with two pupils.

Some students spoke emphatically of hearing gunshots, while others said they heard no such thing. Others said there were knives on campus, however none of the information was confirmed, and DOE Public Relations Officer Cynthia Graham said there were no guns at the school.

"At approximately noon on Tuesday, December 15, police officers were called to the Charlotte Amalie High School to aid in an altercation that began between two students. While the dispute grew to include a pocket of students, the situation was contained by police who arrived on the scene," reads the release. "As a precautionary measure, school and district officials made the decision to place the school on lockdown to ensure the safety of the Charlotte Amalie High School student body and to prohibit outside parties from entering the campus while the situation was being contained by police."

"At no time were firearms involved in the incident," it added.

VIPD also issued a press release on the matter, stating that no knives or guns were found on campus, nor was there any discharge of gunshots. The VIPD did confirm, however, that a student was taken to the Roy Lester Schneider Regional Hospital after suffering an anxiety attack, and that a student fell from the school's second floor.

Principal Mr. Alcede Edwards has launched an investigation into the matter.

Feature Image: A police vehicle parked at the Charlotte Amalie High School as authorities worked to contain fights that had broken out at the learning facility.

Image Credit: VIC.