

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Shooters Take Gunfight To Joseph Gomez School With 450 Students On Site; No One Injured

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ST. THOMAS -- Two suspects who apparently started their altercation on the streets this afternoon, took their gunfight to the campus of the Joseph Gomez Elementary School located in Anna's Retreat, where roughly 450 students representing three different summer camps -- Department of Education, D.O.E's STEM program along with a V.I.P.D. program, with students from first grade all the way to twelfth grade.

Shots were being fired back and forth on the campus, rattling students and staff alike, according to V.I.P.D. Public Information Glen Dratte, who received the information from a camp coordinator. The incident was made even more dangerous as students were on lunch during the gun battle, which occurred at approximately 12:26 p.m. today.

The suspects were seen by many, but there was no one in custody. Mr. Dratte said no one was injured during the incident, and the school was placed on lockdown immediately.

Following the incident, officers conducted a routine investigation of the premises and felt the campus was safe, police said. The students were then given permission to return to their respective classrooms at roughly 2:30 p.m. Parents were immediately notified and given the option to retrieve their children due to the nature of the incident.

Camp will resume as scheduled on Wednesday. Police say the case is presently under investigation by the Criminal Investigation Bureau.

The V.I.P.D. issued a statement urging residents to work together to hold perpetrators of such crimes accountable.

"The lives of innocent children and members of our community are continuously placed in great danger. Gun violence is never the answer and together we must work to hold these individuals accountable for their actions," reads the statement, which accompanied a press release notifying media of the incident.

The force is asking anyone with information that may lead to the arrest of those involved to contact the Investigation Bureau at 340-774-2211 ext. 5579 and 5557. You can also contact 911, Crime Stoppers V.I., the chief's office at 340-715-5548 or the commissioner's office at 340-715-5506.