



# City of Covington



**Covington, VA (Feb. 1, 2025) – The Covington Department of Public Safety is continuing to investigate the concerns at Covington Middle School that led to a precautionary evacuation of students and staff on Friday, Jan. 31.**

**CMS was evacuated at approximately 2:20 pm after an odor was detected in a portion of the building. Students and staff were evacuated to the nearby Covington Recreation Center.**

**During this time, the Covington Fire Department, EMS, Rescue Squad, Smurfit WestRock Rescue Squad, and Covington Division of Police assisted CMS staff with these efforts.**

**Prior to the evacuation, AHPS administration initiated their crisis management plan which involves having designated central office administrative staff members respond to the incident and other key locations in an effort to coordinate with additional outside parties.**

**Several staff members and students who reported feeling ill were treated on the scene and released by EMS responders. One AHPS central staff member was transported to the hospital and later released.**

**Friday evening, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), Hazardous Materials Officer coordinated a response with local emergency management teams to assist Covington DPS to identify the cause of the suspicious odor.**

**VDEM and the Roanoke Valley Regional Hazardous Materials Team along with AHPS administration and staff worked together last night for many hours in an attempt to recreate the suspicious circumstances and were unsuccessful.**

**As of late Friday night, the source of the odor had not been identified, but follow-up efforts are still being made to identify the underlying issue. State and local hazmat response teams will continue to monitor the air throughout the weekend.**

**As we work with AHPS to identify and address this issue, we ask that if you can provide any additional information that could assist us in our investigation, contact the AHPS team at [AHPSinfo@ahps.k12.va.us](mailto:AHPSinfo@ahps.k12.va.us). Forthcoming communications from AHPS will also reference this email. They are actively continuing to investigate the situation as well.**

**All interested parties are recommended to follow AHPS communications on their website at <https://www.ahps.k12.va.us/> and on their Facebook page, AHPublicSchools. AHPS**

**public statements have been promptly posted to their website, and there have been two public statements concerning this incident.**

**Because students and staff safety is our priority across both AHPS and local emergency response, our community agencies are working together to support everyone.**