



Parent FAQs about ALICE School Safety Drills

Q: What is ALICE and ALICE training?

A: As part of updating the District's safety plan, ALICE was implemented several years ago in the unlikely event of an armed intruder in one of our school buildings. This training encourages staff and students to respond based on their situation, rather than rely on centralized instructions in dynamic times of crisis.

ALICE is a federally endorsed safety protocol. The letters ALICE stand for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate:

- Alert – inform people of the threat, giving as much information as possible
- Lockdown – students and staff can choose to lockdown and barricade the room that they are in if they determine that it is not safe to evacuate
- Inform – pass on as much information as possible to others and to First Responders, including calling 911
- Counter – An effort of last resort, if an armed intruder is able to get into the space they are in, individuals can counter with distraction or other tactics. Staff are being trained to use every effort to stop the intruder, instead of relying on the traditional lockdown and hide response.
- Evacuate – if it is safe to do so, all are encouraged to evacuate the building and remove themselves from the threat

The goal of ALICE training is to teach strategies which increase the chances that our staff and students would survive if an intruder were to enter our schools.

Q: Are teachers and staff expected to follow ALICE in order? Are you supposed to alert, then lockdown, then inform?

A: ALICE is not intended to be a checklist of things to do. It is a list of choices, with accompanying strategies that are options for our staff to help themselves and students stay safe. ALICE trains people to know they have choices in an emergency situation.

Q: Why use these different protocols?

A: We believe that all Willoughby-Eastlake schools are the safest place for our students to be. Just like practicing what we should do in a fire with our monthly fire drills, we want to be sure that we will know what to do if an armed intruder is in a school. All of our schools are equipped with a number of safeguards, some seen and others unseen, to keep our students safe.

There is a new standard of care which emphasizes the need for proactive, options-based strategies. This means that we have a responsibility to those in our care and employment to do all we can to prepare them for this rare event, not only in our location but wherever they may find themselves. The federal government recommendations, as well as major law enforcement associations, support these strategies. ALICE Training is the model upon which these official recommendations were built.



Q: How will parents be notified if their child's school is experiencing an emergency?

A: Notification will be sent using methods of school district communication, which can include: email, phone call from School Messenger, website updates, media alerts, text messages, and social media. Families are encouraged to review their School Messenger contact information to ensure they are receiving school messages in the manner they desire.

Q: Why is it important not to drive directly to my child's school during an actual emergency?

A: In the event of an actual emergency, your children will be removed from the site as soon as possible and taken to a safe place for reunification. Your presence in the emergency location will interfere with the ability of first responders to ensure student safety and to respond to the needs of those in need of emergency first aid.

Q: How will I know my child will be safe after the emergency?

A: In the event of a full evacuation, children would be transported to safe evacuation sites off of school grounds where they will be reunited with parents. Parents will be informed about these locations through direct communication.

Q: Will the local police municipalities be in schools to help teachers practice scenarios and possibilities for an active shooter situation?

A: All local law enforcement agencies in our district have trained staff in the ALICE Protocol. This training included different scenarios and drills that imitated an active shooter situation. Staff will share what they have learned with our students in an age appropriate manner, and teach the ALICE procedures through the course of the year. In a crisis, law enforcement is on their way as quickly as possible, but we must learn to help ourselves before they arrive. Just as the fire department equips us with fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems, and EMS trains us in using AED for heart attacks, the law enforcement community is training us in our response options to be used before they are able to arrive.

Q: Since parents do not participate in safety drills, they often find themselves curious about drill procedures. How do you recommend parents learn about how drills are conducted?

A: It is our recommendation that parents engage in age appropriate conversation with their child or children following all safety drills. Should a parent have a specific question please contact your building principal.

Q: Students readiness for this information varies based on age. How will this be communicated to students in age-appropriate ways?

A: We want our children to be prepared for everything, including if an unsafe person was to enter our school. Administrators, student services staff, and teachers will take the principles of ALICE training and present the information in non-fearful, empowering ways. We will take into account a children's developmental readiness to ensure that students feel safe and have opportunities to talk about their feelings and reactions.