

Q: What is ALICE and ALICE training?

A: As part of updating the district's safety plan, a safety protocol called ALICE will be implemented 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.

A team of school administrators attended an intensive two-day training session by the ALICE Training Institute. Since then our administration has led several ALICE trainings with all teachers and support staff during professional development days. Our district will continue with these staff trainings this year and in the coming years. This year our principals and teachers will begin to introduce the ALICE strategies to students, in an age-appropriate way, during safety drills and practices.

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.

During ALICE training, staff and students are trained in different options for responding to a school intruder who is intent on doing harm. In certain circumstances, the “lock the door and hide” strategy might be appropriate. In some cases, the teacher and students might take precautions to barricade the entrance(s) of the classroom. Under certain conditions, it might be the best decision for the teacher and students to flee the building. The goal of ALICE training is that the strategies learned will increase the chances that our staff and students might survive if a terrible circumstance of an armed intruder ever were to occur.

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 in the highly unlikely event of an armed intruder. Some may choose to evacuate and some may choose to lockdown and barricade. Others may be forced to counter if an armed intruder is able

to enter the space they are in. ALICE trains people to know they have choices in an emergency situation. Elementary aged students are not taught to counter.

Q: Why change to these different protocols?

A: We believe that all Pennsbury schools are the safest place for our students to be. Just like practicing what we should do in a fire with our yearly fire drills, we want to be sure that we will know what to do if an armed intruder is in a school. All our schools are equipped with a number of safeguards, some seen and others unseen, to keep our students safe. In addition, since we know that violence has become all too frequent in our world, the strategies and mental preparation we use in ALICE preparation are transferable to any public venue our students may find themselves in where a crisis may occur.

We have to come to the realization that a violent intruder event can happen any time, any place and for any reason. There is a new standard-of-care which emphasizes the need for proactive, options-based, strategies, which 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: What does it mean to “counter”?

A: The main intent of Counter is to distract the intruder, not try to physically take on the intruder. An example of counter would be to throw objects at an intruder for a distraction. Being passive or static has typically not shown to be an effective response in most Active Shooter events. There are examples within recent events of school violence where the difference of passive and active responses determined survival chances. A different approach is needed to help keep our students and staff safe. Elementary aged students are not taught to counter.

Confronting a violent intruder should never be required in any non-law enforcement job description. How each staff member chooses to respond if directly confronted by a violent intruder is up to them.

Q: How will parents be notified if their child’s school is experiencing a crisis?

A: Notification will be sent out using all methods of school district communication, including an email and phone call from Blackboard, website and school app updates, media alerts, text messages, social media, and any other tactic that we have at our means. Families are encouraged to review their email and phone number information on the Home Access Center (HAC) to ensure that they are receiving school messages in the manner they desire.

Q: Where will my child be located after an emergency?

A: The district has identified in the Crisis Plan specific “Reunification” sites where children will be reunited with their parents. In the event of a full evacuation, children and staff would be transported to one of these safe locations and will remain through completion of the reunification process. The district will communicate to parents (see previous question) where this site is located.

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

A: Falls Township, Lower Makefield Township and Tullytown Boro officers has been actively involved throughout the adoption of this plan and the training of our staff. The Police Departments and Pennsbury administration all have staff certified in the ALICE protocol. This training included different scenarios and drills that imitated an active shooter situation. Our staff will continue to train annually and stay current on best practices. 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 in an active intruder situation.

Q: Where can I go for more information about ALICE?

A: Here is a link to information about ALICE: <http://www.alicetraining.com/>

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 staff and teachers will take the principles and tactics taught in the 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. All students Pre-K through 12 will receive a similar message of listening to their teacher, and evacuating or hiding if you are ever alone. They will be taught that if an active shooter is in the building, evacuation should be their first choice, then lockdown/barricade if they cannot leave safely. ***At this time, there is no plan to have simulated shooters in our buildings while students are learning about ALICE.*** All learning will be staff-directed and student-centered. Parents /guardians are encouraged, if they wish, to contact their principals with specific questions or concerns.