

School Emergency Information Guide



For Parents and Guardians

- **When and Why are Students and Staff asked to Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, or Shelter?**

SCHOOL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

A school crisis can take a number of forms including an environmental event, such as a chemical spill or gas leak; a weather emergency, such as a tornado warning; or an intruder in or near the school. The nature of a school crisis dictates whether school officials will put in place a lockdown, lockout, shelter-in-place, evacuation or any combination of these protocols, as a means to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.



- **Parent Responsibilities During a School Emergency and Reunification After a School Emergency**

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN AN EMERGENCY

In a school emergency, the first instinct as a parent is to pick up the telephone and start calling the school or rush to the school and get your child/children. The truth is, this only complicates matters from a safety and security standpoint.

Parents too close to an incident often hinder the rescue attempts of police and fire officials on the scene. The best action parents can take in an emergency is to stay close to their phone and email and to monitor local radio and TV reports for regular updates and instructions.



- **How Will You Be Reunited With Your Child?**

Parents/guardians will be directed by the school or public officials via TV/Radio or other emergency notification systems to their child's specific location. Based on the school's standard operating procedures, students will be released to parents/guardians at the designated family reunification center.

- **How Can You Help?**

BE PREPARED FOR A SCHOOL EMERGENCY

Ensure that your child's emergency contact information is accurate and current.

Become familiar with your schools emergency communications procedures. Each school is committed to providing accurate and timely information in the event of an emergency.



In Case of an Emergency

Although your first reaction would be to call or rush to your child's school, please follow the tips listed below.



DO tune into local TV/Radio Stations for official school news alerts

DO rely only on official communication from school or public safety officials

DO listen for official information regarding the reunification process



DO NOT call or rush to your child's school. Your presence could interfere with emergency responders.

DO NOT phone your child or school. Staff and students are discouraged from using cellphone communication for safety reasons.

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For more information, please visit the Vermont School Safety Center's website at <https://schoolsafety.vermont.gov>.

ALERT, LOCKDOWN, INFORM, COUNTER, EVACUATE

The safety and welfare of our students and staff are our highest priority. Throughout the year, schools perform various safety drills including fire, bus evacuation, building evacuation and lockdown. All schools conduct lockdown drills during which students and staff practice emergency procedures. These lockdown procedures are evaluated for improvements after each drill.

To ensure schools are prepared to proactively handle the threat of an intruder or active shooter, all principals and teachers have been trained in ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate). Beginning January 2024, students and staff will participate in ALICE drills together to practice the tools and knowledge to respond and escape in the event of an active shooter. The school will notify you in advance that the drill will be occurring.

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding ALICE.

Q: What is ALICE and ALICE training?

A: As part of the district's ongoing commitment to student and staff safety, a new drill called ALICE is being implemented district-wide PreK-12. Full implementation will be completed by spring 2019. The goal of ALICE training is to teach students and teachers strategies that will increase the chances that our staff and students survive if a terrible circumstance such as an armed intruder ever were to occur. This training encourages staff and students to respond based on their situation. 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 evacuate the building.

Q: What does ALICE stand for? What does each word really mean?

A.L.I.C.E. is an acronym that stands for:

ALERT: Get the word out that a threat exists

LOCKDOWN: Secure a place to stay as much as possible as a starting point to buy time.

INFORM: Give constant, real-time information throughout the building using all available technology.

COUNTER: This is a last resort. Individuals are unable to escape. Countering may be as simple as creating a distraction to allow opportunities to escape.

EVACUATE: The goal is to move students out of the danger zone. It's important to be prepared to escape.

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.

Q: Why is ALICE training being implemented?

A: We believe that all TV 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 students and staff are prepared and know what to do if an armed intruder enters 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 anytime, 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 to most Active Shooter events. There are examples of recent events of school violence where the difference between passive and active responses determined survival chances. A different approach is needed to help keep our students and staff safe. 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 a personal choice.

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

A: Notification will be sent out using all methods of school district communication, including a phone call from our robo call system, website updates, media alerts, and social media. Families are encouraged to check with their child’s school to make sure their emergency contact information is up to date. In the event of a true emergency, all emergency contacts will be called.

Q: How will we 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: Have School Police, administrators, teachers and school staff practiced scenarios and possibilities for an active shooter situation?

A: The District’s school police officers have been trained in the ALICE Protocol and several are certified as ALICE trainers. All staff have received training in the ALICE protocol. The 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 way, and teach them the ALICE procedures through the course of the year.

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

A: The ALICE training institute guides the District in our training approach. Additional information is available at their website <https://www.alicetraining.com/our-program/alice-training/k12-education/>. If you have specific questions, regarding your child's school, please contact your school principal.

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 child's 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 and tactics taught in the ALICE training and present the information in non-fearful, empowering ways. We will take into account a child's developmental readiness to ensure that students feel safe and have opportunities to talk about their feelings and reactions.

Q: Should I talk with my child about the ALICE training in advance?

A: The decision to talk with your child about the ALICE training in advance is advised. As with any drill (fire, evacuation, lockdown), it is important that your child knows the importance of listening to their teacher during a drill or an actual emergency. Ultimately, the decision is up to each individual parent. As a parent, you know your child best. It's important to be calm and keep any information very simple.

Q: Should I talk with my child at home after the training?

A: As a parent, you know your child best. Children may want to process what they learned or ask questions. Older students may be interested in talking about what they would do in an emergency situation. Follow your child's lead and keep the opportunities to talk openly.

Q: What if my child asks a question about this procedure and I don't know how to answer it?

A: School guidance counselors and your child's teacher are good resources. You can say that you're not sure, but it's a good question and you'll help find an answer. You may encourage an older child to ask their teacher because other students may have the same question and ask them to be sure to share the answer with you.