



Southern Lehigh School District

Parent, Guardian, and Family FAQ:

ALICE School Safety Drills

The Southern Lehigh School District remains committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all students, faculty, and staff. As part of our continuous review and refinement of school safety and emergency preparedness plans, our district currently utilizes the ALICE protocol for active threat and intruder response during the school year.

Q: What is ALICE, and what does ALICE training entail?

ALICE is an options-based active threat protocol endorsed by federal, state, and local emergency response agencies. Rather than relying solely on rigid or centralized commands during dynamic, fast-moving crises, ALICE empowers staff and students to make real-time decisions based on their immediate environment and situational safety. The acronym **ALICE** stands for:

Component	Action Description & Guidance
Alert	Notify as many people as possible about the presence of a threat, providing clear, concise, and specific details about the nature and location of the incident as soon as available.
Lockdown	If evacuation is not immediately safe or feasible, secure the area by locking doors, barricading entrances with heavy furniture, turning off lights, and preparing active response options.
Inform	Communicate real-time updates to building occupants and First Responders (including 911 dispatchers) using PA systems, internal messaging, or direct updates to maintain situational awareness.
Counter	A tactic of last resort used only if an intruder breaches a secured area and direct contact is unavoidable. Focuses on creating mass noise, movement, and distraction to compromise the intruder's accuracy and control.
Evacuate	If a safe evacuation path is available, occupants are strongly encouraged to leave the facility immediately and move toward designated secure locations, removing themselves from danger.



During ALICE training, staff and students are taught and practice the 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.

During the school year, all Southern Lehigh staff participate in ongoing professional development and simulations, while students engage in age-appropriate safety drills designed to practice these proactive safety options.

Q: Why does Southern Lehigh School District utilize active options-based protocols?

Our schools remain safe learning environments thanks to close coordination and active safety partnerships with the Upper Saucon Township Police Department, Coopersburg Police Department, emergency services, district staff, and local families. Historical research on active threat events demonstrates that traditional "lock the door and hide" procedures may not always be the single best strategy. Giving staff and students multiple options (such as safe evacuation or heavy barricading) significantly increases survival probabilities. Furthermore, these critical situational-awareness skills extend beyond the classroom, providing valuable life skills applicable in public settings worldwide.

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. ALICE training provides the opportunity to learn about which are the best actions to take in a dangerous situation.

Q: What does "Counter" mean? Will students be taught physical fighting tactics?

No. Students and staff are not taught to fight or physically attack an intruder. The sole purpose of Counter is distraction as a last-resort protective response if an intruder manages to gain entry into an occupied room. This strategy is adapted to be age-appropriate and taught according to the developmental readiness of students across different grade levels. Distraction tactics may include making loud noises, throwing items or classroom objects toward the intruder's line of vision, and engaging in erratic movement to disrupt control. Studies of crisis



events demonstrate that passive targets face far greater harm than active, distracting targets.

Q: How is ALICE information communicated across different grade levels?

We recognize that student emotional and developmental readiness varies across elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school levels. District educators and administrators present safety drills in an empowering, non-frightening manner:

- **Elementary & Intermediate Levels:** Instruction focuses on listening closely to trusted adult instructions, moving quickly to safety, and fundamental concepts of active listening and situational awareness.
- **Middle & High School Levels:** Drills involve more explicit discussions regarding situational assessment, identifying secondary exits, barricading methods, and decision-making during emergency situations.

We always take into account children's developmental readiness to ensure that students feel safe and have opportunities to talk about their feelings and reactions.

Q: How will parents and guardians be notified during an actual emergency?

In the event of an active crisis or building emergency, the district will launch immediate communication across all standard emergency alert systems. Notifications will be broadcast via:

- Phone Calls and Text Messaging (District Notification System)
- Official Email Communications
- District Website Alert Banners
- Official District Social Media Platforms

Note: It is crucial that all parents and guardians regularly verify and update their current contact information in the Parent Portal/Infinite Campus to ensure seamless receipt of emergency alerts.

Q: How will student pickup and family reunification work after an emergency?

If a building evacuation is required, students will be safely transported to pre-designated off-site reunification facilities. For student and staff security, designated evacuation locations are kept confidential prior to an event and will be communicated directly to parents/guardians once first responders have secured the reunification site.

Important Family Instruction: Parents and guardians must wait for official notifications and explicit instructions before driving to designated reunification sites. Arriving early or unannounced can delay emergency vehicles and impact first responder efforts.



Q: Where can families access further resources regarding district safety initiatives?

For additional questions regarding school safety protocols, please contact your student's school building principal or visit the official district website. Information regarding general active threat preparedness principles is also available through official safety resources. You can also visit the ALICE website (<http://www.alicetraining.com>)

You may also contact Dr. Deanna Webb, School Safety & Security Coordinator of the Southern Lehigh School District, at webbd@slsd.org, or 610-282-3121.