

What is ALICE?

Individualized decision-making options in response to immediate threat with consideration to age and ability

ALICE 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. Barricade if necessary, move to a safe spot with escape in mind.

INFORM: Give constant, real-time information throughout the building using all available technology. Communication keeps the shooter off balance.

COUNTER: Apply skills to distract, confuse, and gain control by using noise, movement, distance, and distractions.

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

EVACUATE: To reduce the number of potential targets for the shooter and reduce the chances of victims resulting from friendly fire when help arrives. Take advantage of time and distance from the threat. The goal is to move students out of the danger zone. It's important to be prepared to escape.

VBPS Goal and Communication Points.

- Maximize survival with the objective to escape from harm, get law enforcement on the scene quickly, decide and act, and interrupt the intruder's decision action cycle.
- Van Buren Public Schools have plans and procedures in place for crisis situations. Van Buren Public Schools consider the safety of students and staff their highest priority and have developed strong crisis plans and procedures for our schools. Although we hope we will never need to activate these procedures, we conduct regular drills and review our plans annually. These plans are constantly being reviewed and looking for improvements if needed.

- It isn't enough to lock the building and keep students inside if someone is threatening them. Traditionally, schools have used a procedure known as "lockdown" which means locking the school building and classrooms and having students and teachers take shelter in their classrooms. We believe that offering additional age-appropriate options will allow our students and teachers to be better prepared if a crisis situation occurs. Providing a constant flow of information to everyone inside the building can allow opportunities to safely evacuate the building. Rescue by the police can take some time. An important goal of the ALICE program is to evacuate as many people as possible to a safe place.

- ALICE training will take the place of the lockdown drills we've been doing. The length of the training time for students may range from 15 to 30 minutes, depending upon the age of the students.

- Training will be age-appropriate and will take place in the classroom with their teacher leading the discussion. Discussions with younger students will be an extension of "stranger danger" discussions and focus on listening carefully to the teacher in case of an emergency and following directions promptly.

Talking With Your Child About ALICE

Common Questions

- Should you talk with your child about the ALICE training in advance?

That's up to each individual parent. You know your child best. It's important to be calm and keep any information very simple.

- Should you talk with your child at home after the training?

Again, as a parent, you know your child best. For younger children, the most important thing is to listen carefully and remember to follow their teacher's directions whether it's during a drill or an actual emergency. 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. Our schools hold emergency drills multiple times a year, so questions or concerns may come up later. Students are accustomed to various drills, so your child may see this discussion as something routine.

- What if your child asks a question about this procedure and you don't know how to answer it?

Your child's teacher, principal and school psychologist or guidance counselor are good resources. You may encourage your 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.

- What if your child expresses fear about their safety?

It's important to remember that we talk about ways to stay safe so that we can be prepared if something happens. If your child is worried, your school teacher, principal, psychologist or guidance counselor is an excellent resource.