

ALICE Safety Training for Port Townsend Schools

Dear Port Townsend School District Families:

Like many school districts, Port Townsend Schools is implementing new programs to increase our safety training for staff and students, in response to the national increase in violent intruder events happening across the country. Over the past few years, our schools have become increasingly more secure, from installing quick locks on exterior and some classroom doors, to keeping more of our outer doors locked, preparing a single entry point on the elementary and middle school campuses, and practicing 'lockdown drills' as part of our classroom safety training.

After researching best practices for keeping students and staff safe during violent intruder events, the district committed this past spring, to bring the ALICE safety protocol to our school district. ALICE stands for Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Evacuate. ALICE is in line with the standard of response recommended from the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Education, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. At Port Townsend Schools, we trained five individuals; three staff members and two city police officers. Our ALICE certified trainers are now prepared to begin instructing staff and students in the ALICE response protocols.

Research shows that through training and empowerment, individuals of all ages and in many situations can apply the ALICE strategies and improve survival chances in any environment or emergency situation, including one where they may find themselves confronted by a violent intruder, including an active shooter. We want to assure parents that Port Townsend Schools puts student and staff safety as our number one priority. Staff members will be trained first, using three formats – a one hour online class, a two hour in-person training, and a two hour scenario/drill exercise in their own school building. Student training will follow during the second half of this school year. Students will be trained by their own teachers, along with support from our ALICE instructors, starting in January 2019. Within our ALICE training model, our trainers are committed to provide student training that is developmentally appropriate, is not fear based, and will not use any 'scare tactics'.

Prior to the student training and 'safety talks' occurring in schools and classrooms, parents will be notified through a letter home, or in the school's monthly newsletter. You can partner with us by helping teach/remind your child about safe practices and making good decisions related to their personal safety. Especially for elementary age children, parents are encouraged to review these following points at home:

- During any kind of emergency at school, it is important to follow directions from your teacher
- There are people of all ages, colors, and types that can be mean and choose to cause harm to others
- There are many solutions and options when faced with a problem
- You are smart, capable and can respond appropriately in dangerous situations to protect yourself
- Query your child about the safety drills they do at school, and what they mean (fire, evacuation, etc.)
- Help your child identify places where they think it would be safe to go during an emergency-at home, at school, out in the community, etc.

I encourage you to contact the principal at your child's school with any specific questions or concerns. And again, know that we continue to put your child's safety as our top priority.

Sincerely,



Dr. John Polm
Superintendent