

Tewksbury Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent
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celebrating Excellence



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Dear Parents/Guardians,

In order to ensure a safe school environment for students and staff, the Tewksbury Public Schools District Security Team will soon conduct a series of safety drills at all of our schools. These drills include Alternate Evacuation, Alert, Lockdown, and Lockout drills. The District Security Team is comprised of police and fire personnel, school administrators, and school health representatives.

Alert

“Alert” is NOT an evacuation. It is used to move students to an assigned area during assessment of a threat or potential threat to a building. It may or may not be followed by an “Alternate” evacuation or prior to a Lockdown. When an Alert announcement is made at the school, students and staff will hear; *“The school is going into an “Alert” situation. All students return to their assigned rooms.”*

Evacuation

“Evacuation” initiates an evacuation of the building for any reason other than fire, explosion, gas leak, etc., and would commonly be used in the event of a bomb threat. When an Evacuation announcement is made at the school, students and staff will hear; *“The school is going into an “Evacuation” situation. All students and staff must evacuate the building using their Evacuation routes.”*

Lockdown

“Lockdown” is a procedure to be employed when dealing with a threat or potential threat to the school building or occupants from within the building. When a Lockdown announcement is made at the school, students and staff will hear; *“The school is going into a Lockdown situation, all students and adults in corridors go into the nearest room. There will be further information forthcoming.”*

Lockout

“Lockout” is a procedure to be employed when dealing with a threat or potential threat to the school building or occupants from outside of the building. When a Lockout announcement is made at the school, students and staff will hear; *“The school is going into a Lockout situation, all students and adults in corridors go into their assigned room. There will be further information forthcoming.”*

We will be conducting two Evacuation drills and two Lockout drills at each school during the academic year. Since an Alert normally precedes an Evacuation, we will be practicing both of these during the scheduled drills. We will execute Lockdown drills and Lockout drills so that staff and students are aware of the differences.

Our first Evacuation drills were conducted at all schools during the month of October. The drills posed minimal interruption to the school day and were satisfactorily executed.

TPS Mission Statement:

To educate and challenge all learners in the Tewksbury Public School Community while supporting their development as well prepared and productive members of a diverse global society.

Lockdown, Evacuation, and Alert drills at all of our schools will take place throughout the year. We will not announce these drills in advance in order to simulate an emergency. A second full-scale evacuation of a to-be-determined school will take place in the spring.

Emergency grade radios have been deployed across the school district. This enables key school staff direct access with one another and emergency personnel throughout the community. Our continued goal is to maintain and improve the safety of all members of our Tewksbury Public School community. With additional funding from Town coffers and the Tewksbury Education Foundation, the district has enhanced security measures at all of our schools including additional security cameras, card access readers, and alarm systems.

A.L.I.C.E. Acronym

A.L.I.C.E. is a Proactive Response to a Man Made Threat. The purpose of A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training is to prepare individuals to handle the threat of an Active Shooter. A.L.I.C.E. teaches individuals to participate in their own survival, while leading others to safety. Though no one can guarantee success in this type of situation, this new set of skills will greatly increase the odds of survival should anyone face this form of disaster.

To make it easy to remember in a stressful situation, A.L.I.C.E. is broken up into five strategies: Alert; Lockdown; Inform; Counter and Evacuate.

- The purpose of **ALERT** is to notify as many people as possible within the danger zone that a potentially life threatening risk exists.
- The purpose of **LOCKDOWN** is to secure in place, and prepare to **EVACUATE** or **COUNTER**, if needed.
- The purpose of **INFORM** is to continue to communicate the intruder's location in real time.
- The purpose of **COUNTER** is to interrupt the intruder and make it difficult or impossible to aim. This is a strategy of last resort.
- The purpose of **EVACUATE** is to remove yourself from the danger zone when it is safe to do so.

During the past year, selected school district employees participated in a two day training focusing on the A.L.I.C.E. Protocols, (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate). In cooperation with the Tewksbury Police Department and the Tewksbury Fire Department, we have introduced this safety procedure in all of our schools. The A.L.I.C.E. drills and protocols have been introduced to staff, students and parents throughout the district. Following the drills, we meet with the entire student body and staff to debrief and answer follow-up questions and concerns.

Please know that in the upcoming months we will be conducting random K-9 searches at our schools. We not only strive for safe schools, we expect our schools to be drug free as well.

I trust you will agree that we have the people, processes, infrastructure, and crisis communications plan in place throughout our district to help safeguard your children. If and when an emergency arises, our district staff is thoroughly trained to respond in a timely and accurate manner. Of course, I consider the matter of school safety to be a priority for all. I ask you to keep your eyes open and to report any unsafe condition or matter to your child's principal, or to me...and always call 911 if an emergency exists. Together, we can continue to create a broad and superior security network for the safety of students and staff.

Sincerely,

Chris Malone

Christopher J. Malone
Superintendent of Schools

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