



BRISTOL COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

135 Center Street, Dighton, Massachusetts 02715

Tel. (508) 669-6744 • FAX (508) 669-6747

Brian Higgins
Assistant Principal

Kevin P. Braga
Assistant Superintendent/Principal

Marie-Juanita D. DiGioia
Special Education Director

A.L.I.C.E. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is A.L.I.C.E.?

A.L.I.C.E is an acronym for a series of options to consider in the unlikely event of an armed intruder in our schools. Bristol County Agricultural High School has adopted these response options as an addition to our emergency response plan. The acronym stands for:

Alert – Alert people of the threat, giving as much information as possible.

Lockdown – Occupants can choose to lockdown and barricade the room that they are in if they determine that it is not safe to evacuate.

Inform – Pass on as much real-time information as possible to staff, students, and first responders as the event unfolds.

Counter – As a last resort, if an armed intruder is able to gain entry to an area occupied by students and/or staff, occupants should distract, evade, or counter the aggressor instead of being a passive victim.

Evacuate – A primary option, staff and students should evacuate the building if safe to do so

Does an individual have to follow all of the steps of the A.L.I.C.E. program in sequential order?

No. A.L.I.C.E. is NOT meant to be a checklist of things to do. It is a series of options that we are offering our students and staff in order to stay safe in the highly unlikely event of an intruder. Some may choose to evacuate and some may choose to lockdown and barricade. Others may be forced to counter if an intruder is able to enter the space they are in.

Is the adoption of A.L.I.C.E. an admission that the schools are not safe?

Bristol County Agricultural High School provides an extremely safe learning environment. However, just like practicing what we should do in a fire, we want to be sure that we will know what to do in the very unlikely event of an intruder in school.

If my child gets proactive, couldn't they get hurt?

Yes, they could. But being passive and static has not shown to be an effective response during an active shooter event. Prior events have shown the differences of passive vs. active responses in relationship to survivability.

Is there a possibility of secondary attacks if people are trying to leave the area?

There is always a possibility of a secondary attack, no matter what the event. But our fear of the unknown

should not interfere with our manner of dealing with the known. Common sense says a threat inside the building should dictate getting out, much more than the fear of perhaps another threat outside should dictate staying inside with the known shooter. Any threats outside will be contacted and neutralized by police much quicker than one inside the building.

Isn't this what the police are for?

The police cannot be at all places at all times. The average response time for law enforcement is 5-6 minutes. Recent incidents of mass violence in schools have shown that many injuries and casualties can occur in only a few minutes. These response options are intended to allow staff and students to survive for 5-6 minutes on their own.

Will Bristol County Agricultural High School be training staff so they know what to do in the event of an active shooter?

Yes. All staff attended a training offered in partnership with the Dighton Police Department. Staff participated in classroom sessions and active shooter drills in order to master each of the response options.

Won't proactive actions agitate the gunman to commit violence?

It is accepted that these people seek one thing – hurt as many people as possible in the time afforded to them. There is no way to make a determined killer be more violent than they are already.

Who should make the decision as to what is the best option to take?

Those under attack should make the decision that is best for them given the situation. Based on the information that is known, a group of people will decide which option will offer them the best chance of staying safe.

Won't we lose control of the event if people make their own decision and do whatever they decide they need to do?

Yes. There will be a time when centralized Command and Control will be lost. But in actuality, there is anyway. During the initial attack, the attacker is in control. Proactive action on behalf of the targets will return the control to the staff and students in the school. Also, the command and control ability of the administration and Police is secondary to the ability of those under attack to survive.

If students evacuate on their own, how will we know where they go?

There will be an initial period of time where we may not be able to account for all involved. However, the Dighton Police and Bristol County Agricultural High School are prepared to take as much time as possible to determine every individual's location following an event. In short, survival is more important than knowing where each person is.

Why are we changing our emergency response plans?

Recent examples of mass violence in schools have shown that lockdown should not be the only response to an intruder. Although lockdown is still an appropriate response to some emergency situations (i.e. an act of violence or a fugitive in the community), it is not the appropriate response to every emergency situation.

Could we be training our future "enemy"?

A potential intruder most likely knew about lockdown protocols in the past. We have now empowered our staff and students with a series of options that will serve as a deterrent to someone who is hoping to

cause as much harm as possible in a short amount of time.

How will this information be presented to students in Bristol County Agricultural High School?

Bristol County Agricultural High School and the Dighton Police Department are working together to be sure that we do not scare or confuse students, while at the same time getting them the information they need if an event occurs. Continual communication will occur with parents throughout the rollout and implementation phase.