



# ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) Catholic Schools Office is committed to providing the safest possible environment for our students and all school personnel. Over the years, our schools have taken steps to become more secure, but as recent history has dictated, we need to continue to include proactive life- saving measures to ensure the safety of all of our students and employees.

During the last several years, educators and parents have had concerns about the threat of an armed intruder. Our previous response protocol to a violent critical incident would have been to simply “lockdown.” During a traditional lockdown, students and staff are instructed to lock their classroom doors, turn out the lights, and hide in the far corner of the classroom while remaining calm and quiet. We have followed this procedure for many years, but we now know that we must provide students and staff with more options in case they are confronted with an armed intruder. The ADW Catholic Schools Office has enhanced the lockdown procedures that we, as well as experts across the country, believe will increase the chance of survival during a violent critical incident. The enhancements that we will teach our students and staff are known as **ALICE**.

ALICE is an acronym:

- **Alert:** We will be aware of our surroundings. Alert is overcoming denial, recognizing the signs of danger and receiving notifications about the danger from others.
- **Lockdown:** The lockdown will include locking the door but will also include enhanced measures as to deny entry.
- **Inform:** Continual communication keeping the staff and students informed allows for good decision making.
- **Counter:** Apply skills of movement, noise, distance, distractions, and in some cases using our overwhelming numbers to gain control of the situation (age and ability appropriate). This is used when lockdown or evacuation are not possible.
- **Evacuate:** Create space between our students and the actual threat.

This is not an attempt to teach our students or staff to make any attempt to subdue an armed intruder. However, we will provide them with options that, if faced with a life-threatening situation, can help to greatly enhance their chance of survival. Training will emphasize that the best way to survive a violent critical incident is to evacuate, when possible, and providing our schools the authority and ability to make that decision. Each school principal and one or two other school personnel have been trained to be an ALICE instructor. They are currently training all school employees on the ALICE program, and will begin training students in the near future. Parents will receive updates directly from each school regarding upcoming drills (which may

include evacuation and off site reunification locations), parent information sessions, and ongoing training updates.

We look forward to working with your students to provide them with the skills they might need at school and in the community, if confronted with a critical violent incident. You will receive information from your principal regarding an upcoming information session and the implementation of drills. Please contact your school principal or the Catholic Schools Office, if you have any questions or concerns about the ALICE program.

Thank you for entrusting our schools with your children. I look forward to continuing the work to ensure that our schools are the absolute safest that we can make them.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Ryan, III', with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Ryan, III  
Superintendent for Catholic Schools