

## **An Open Letter to the Cedar Cliff Students, Faculty, and Parents Regarding Active Shooter Protocol For the Cedar Cliff School System**

Violence on school and university campuses has gripped the headlines, given reason for pause and reflection and, unfortunately, forced school administrators across the state to prepare for our worst nightmare, a tragedy on our school grounds as a result of a school shooting. Before going further, I must freely admit, if an individual is determined to cause harm to students on our campus or in one of our buildings, no amount of preparation can eliminate those intentions. Even the best experts in the field admit, active shooter incidents occur without warning and are impossible to predict. However, prudent planning obligates school administrators to prepare and instruct our colleagues as well as our students on how to respond should a tragic event such as this take place.

For some time, school districts across the state have been required to submit school crisis plans to the state for review and compliance mandates. Districts have been conducting drills, planning, working with law enforcement officials, and developing procedures in an effort to minimize injury or loss of life.

Admittedly, over time those plans have changed as law enforcement officials have reviewed and examined intelligence and data from crime scenes, conducted interviews, and generally analyzed past incidents. Unfortunately, law enforcement has had too many opportunities to review these scenarios that have become all too familiar. Recently, there was even a very unfortunate event in one of the school districts of our Ohio Heritage Athletic Conference. With each passing event, it eliminates the ability for one to say, "That would/could never happen here."

In the past, many school districts utilized the traditional lock-down approach whereby students stayed in classrooms, away from windows/doors and waited for law enforcement to arrive and address the situation. Over time, this approach has been found effective in some types of disturbances, but not others. Today's training and instruction is tailored to the situation and provides those in charge the flexibility to improvise and adapt to the situation. Prior to the start of this school year, all staff members (and even some substitute staff members), along with local law enforcement officials, and law enforcement from the Greene County Sheriff's Department participated in ALICE training. This is training to better prepare for and survive a traumatic event such as that of a violent intruder. Once again, no system is guaranteed or perfect, however, we do believe this training was beneficial to all those in attendance.

Cedar Cliff School District uses the OneCallNow system for emergency alerts. This is the same system utilized for inclement weather, the change in scheduling of events, or any emergency necessary. Should you desire to be contacted via the emergency system, notify the central office at (937) 766-6000 and ask to be added to the alert system.

Requirements have been put into place from the Ohio Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security to enhance security measures at public schools across the state. These requirements include the training of students as well as staff to better prepare and survive an event such as these. Cedar Cliff Local School District will be participating in these mandated, necessary drills but wishes to do so after ensuring you, as the community, have a good understanding of our training protocol.

On the morning of January 25, 2019, Cedar Cliff Schools will be conducting the mandated/required active intruder drill. During the course of this event, students will review and “practice” emergency techniques and evacuation, become educated on the topic of active shooter protocol, and conduct round-table discussions with faculty and staff on the importance of this issue, as well as what steps to take should an intruder enter their classroom with dangerous intentions.

We have taken great steps to determine what this drill should “look like” at each grade level for the district. We have worked with law enforcement officials, held discussions with surrounding districts, and researched various options. In short, grades K-2 will be taught the principles of stranger/danger and following the instructions of their classroom teacher, while grades 3-12 will be utilizing the ALICE techniques incorporated at most facilities throughout the country, instructing students in efforts to defend themselves should an intruder enter their classroom. The following is an outline of the morning’s activities:

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On the morning of January 25, at approximately 9:30 AM, Mr. Mason will make an announcement to the school outlining the drill, the purposes of this event, and what activities will take place.

9:41-9:50 ALICE video(s) will be shown to students

- We have two videos – one for K-2 and one for 3-12.

9:51-10:05 Round-table discussion questions:

- Grades 3-12 Teachers will prompt students with questions:
  - What if we had an intruder trying to get in here (this classroom), what can we use to barricade the door?
  - What if someone came in here, how can we prevent them from hurting all of us (i.e. what weapons do we have)?
  - Teach students about restraining Arms/Legs and getting them to the ground—especially, how to go about each job/task.
  - Remind students about trash can for guns/ammunition discovered.
  - What if I am out of the room and something happens? (Teacher and/or students—where do we go/what do we do?)
  - If we had the opportunity to run from an intruder in the MS hallway, how can we get out of the school?

- If we had the opportunity to run from an intruder in the HS hallway, how can we get out of the school?
- If someone got in and caused harm, what can we use to address any wounds or get help?
- Grades K-2 will have pre-planned activities/topics based on stranger-danger techniques
  - How can we barricade/block the door? (This group/level will still need to talk about this issue—utilize a “building a ‘fort’ to keep out strangers” discussion).

10:06-10:21 Drill

- Police/Fire Officials in building.
- K-2 teachers get students out to MS gymnasium.
- Principals making announcement(s) regarding intruder and location.
- Students and staff making decisions to utilize run/hide/fight techniques discussed and reviewed in video(s).
- Actual officer going into two pre-determined rooms—One classroom in MS hallway / One classroom in HS hallway.
- Students will have plastic balls for drill purposes.
- *The police officer will be utilizing “blanks” in a pistol for drill purposes—at no time pointing any weapon at students—this gun will be used in hallway outside rooms to enable faculty/staff to understand how and what they will hear in the event of an actual emergency.*

10:22-10:35 Make announcement for faculty/staff to clear rooms of barricade and begin “De-briefing session/final discussion.”

- Get feedback from students: What did you think? How did you feel?
- Make sure students understand the importance of letting faculty/staff know if someone is planning something like this—so this drill never need be a reality!

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Again, we wish to be both prudent *AND* cognizant of our students’ needs; thus, any emergency drill is of the utmost importance to us as school faculty. Should you have any questions about this drill or district efforts regarding student safety, feel free to contact the Superintendent or your child’s building principal.

Best Regards and Go Indians!



Chad Mason, Superintendent