

Parent Guide to School Emergencies

Western Area Career & Technology Center is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff. We have established policies and procedures that have been designed to effectively deal with an emergency incident should it occur in our School and community. These procedures have been established in cooperation with the local police forces who continue to be valuable partners in our effort to maintain a safe and secure school environment.

Our school has its own Crisis Response Handbook and crisis team that conducts monthly meetings.

Visiting Our Schools

Parents are welcome visitors to our school and we ask that you comply with our visitor procedures in order to maintain a safe environment for our students and staff.

- **All visitors are required to use the Main Entrance (nearest the flagpole)**, identify themselves and their purpose for visiting to the office personnel.
- Upon entrance, **visitors must present valid photo identification and obtain a Visitor's Pass**, which must be work during the visit.
- Visitor instructions are posted at the Main Entrance of the building.

PLEASE NOTE: Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited on school property, this includes vehicles parked on school property.

Keeping Student Emergency Contact Information Updated

During an emergency, it is vital that the school have accurate and up-to-date emergency contact information for all students. In an emergency, the school will contact parents using the Western Area School Messenger alert system. **If your telephone number(s) changes, please contact the main office at 724.746.2890, Ext. 100**, to get your updated contact information immediately entered into the Student Data Base.

In An Emergency

If an emergency situation would occur in our school, parents will be notified by telephone using School Messenger. An emergency message would include basic information about the nature of the emergency. In the event of an evacuation/relocation, **you will also be notified where the students are being transported and where you can be reunited with your child.** We have established reunification points. In addition to School Messenger, the school may also use other media to communicate with parents:

- **The school website:** www.wactc.net
- **Social Media: Facebook –** www.facebook.com/westernareactc
- **Local radio station WJPA**

How Parents Can Help In Emergency Situations

For the safety of everyone, parents are asked to wait for instructions from the school regarding how you can be reunited with your child in an emergency situation.

- **Please do not call the school during an emergency.** If you call the school during an emergency, you will probably not be able to speak with anyone, and you may tie up telephone lines that could be used for communicating with 911 and other first responders.
- **Please refrain from coming to the school. Follow the instructions from the school regarding where and when you can be reunited with your child.** While we understand that emotions are high in an emergency situation and parents want to be reunited with their child as quickly as possible, parents who arrive at the school in an emergency will interfere with the ability of First Responders to

do their jobs. Our goal is to get you reunited with your child as quickly as possible, and parents who arrive at the school in an emergency situation only delay the reunification process.

PLEASE NOTE: The school will release students only to the adult(s) designated on the Student's Emergency Information Card. Photo ID will be required. Please be patient during the reunification process, as it is important to verify that students are being released to the proper adult.

Safety Practices and Procedures

The school conducts a variety of safety drills throughout the school year, so students and staff can become familiar with the procedures associated with each of the scenarios. These drills include fire, weather and interior/exterior threats.

We encourage parents to talk about the drills with their children to emphasize the need to stay calm, not be scared, listen carefully, follow instructions and take the drills seriously. While it is our hope that a real emergency never occurs, these drills are an effective way to ensure that students and staff know and can follow the procedures in an emergency situation.

The school has trained its staff and students in the principles of ALICE (**A**lert, **L**ockdown, **I**nform, **C**ounter and **E**vacuate). These are nationally recognized protocols for keeping everyone safe in an active threat, and are designed to be age appropriate.

Here Is A Brief Overview of ALICE

A – Alert – It is important in an emergency situation that people know what is happening and where. For example, if an intruder is near the Main Office, it is important to communicate that information so teachers and students can decide if the best course of action is to lock down or evacuate, depending where they are in the building.

L – Lockdown – In a lockdown situation, students and staff are encouraged to secure the door and create a barricade to deter entrance into a room.

I – Inform – As the situation unfolds, it is important to share as much updated information as possible, such as the intruder has left the School Store and is now headed toward the maintenance office. This information helps those who may be in a locked down area to decide if they should continue to stay in a place or evacuate.

C – Counter – If an intruder enters a classroom, staff and students are encouraged to disrupt/distract the intruder by throwing objects or swarming/overtaking the intruder, rather than only sheltering in place, depending on the situation and the age of the students.

E – Evacuate – If possible, students and staff are encouraged to get away from the situation as quickly as possible, get outside the building and proceed to the established rally point.

ALICE principles are delivered to students in an age-appropriate manner and are not used in this order, but they are all viable options to be used in emergency situations.

To learn more about ALICE go to: <http://www.alicetraining.com/>.