



7 Tips to Setup a Safer Classroom to Guard Against a School Shooter

One of the most basic ways to increase safety in schools is to set up classrooms in a safer way. For an ALICE Certified teacher classroom safety becomes an utmost priority. Here are some tips on how to maximize safety and support ALICE strategies through specific environmental changes to the standard classroom layout.

As you look around your classroom keep these important ALICE school security tips in mind:

Know the layout of your school and the nearest exit to your classroom

WHY: Teachers need to be aware of the overall school layout, classroom numbers, and hallway names. In the moments of a violent intruder or active shooter, any information regarding the situation will be immensely beneficial to you in making survival decisions. If you are not familiar with the layout of the school information you may receive during a crisis will not be helpful to you in making survival decisions.

Place your natural teaching position as far from the door as possible

WHY: Sadly, a trend that appears in school shooting tragedies of the past is that the teachers, as leaders of the classroom, are typically the first target of an attack. Because of this fact, you should consider putting your natural teaching position farther away from the door to help buy more time should an incident occur. Students are counting on you for instruction in these types of situations, so it is imperative that you be able to advise them.

Pre-plan how you will barricade your room in case of a violent intruder

WHY: One of the best tips that you can work on while setting up your classroom is to assess the overall environment of the room and figure out the ways you can barricade the room. You can arrange your furniture in ways that facilitate quicker barricading.

Create a path into the class

WHY: By creating a natural barrier on the way into the classroom, you build an obstacle that an intruder would have to work around to accomplish his mission. The goal of ALICE strategies in school safety training is to increase your chances of survival during a violent situation, and to do this, your job is to make it more difficult for the attacker to succeed.

Observe the type of door on your classroom

WHY: The type of the door that exists on your classroom impacts how you plan your room for a barricade. If your door opens in you should set up the room differently than if your door opens out. Does the door have glass in it or beside it? What type of handle does it have? Is it a solid door or a hollow core door? Does it have a hydraulic opening arm at the top? Does the door handle lock with a key and do you have to go outside to lock it? Is the door frame metal or wood? Is the door in good working condition?

Know how to utilize your classroom window

WHY: Teachers must also consider alternative ways of evacuation from their classrooms. If you have windows are you prepared to use them for evacuation purposes? How do your windows open? Can people fit through your windows? What floor are you on? Is it safe for people to drop from your windows? Prepare yourself for breaking the window if necessary.

Keep your door locked when you have students in your room

WHY: Finally, while it can be an inconvenience to keep your door locked at all times, it is an immediate barrier that can exist if an attack begins just outside of your classroom. A locked door may buy you precious time to begin using another ALICE strategy to increase chances of survival.

Keep in mind that the application of these suggestions depends on the physical layout of your classroom, the resources that you have available, and the level of authority that you have to make changes in your classroom. All these suggestions give you time to recognize and respond should someone try to gain entry into your room. These are all things you can do now that won't disrupt your management of the class. After going through ALICE Training, teachers see the classroom and their world through different eyes. We at the ALICE Training Institute are always here to answer questions for you. Be Safe and have a great school year.