



September 21, 2023

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Texas law now requires school districts to distribute information to parents and guardians about the safe storage of firearms. The attached information will help you learn about options for, as well as how to talk to your child and others about, the safe storage of firearms.

**In 2021, 4,613 Texans experienced gun-related deaths.** The Texas Department of State Health Services (SHS) reports that 55% of Texas firearms deaths in 2020 were suicides and that 59% of all suicides in Texas were by firearms. Suicide attempts involving firearms have a 90% fatality rate. **Restricting access to guns is critical in reducing acts of violence, whether as self-harm or towards others. Acts of mass violence and interpersonal violence often end in suicide.**

**It is unlawful to store, transport, or abandon an unsecured firearm in a place where children are likely to be and can obtain access to the firearm.** Under [Texas Penal Code 46.13](#), a person commits the offense of making a firearm accessible to a child if the child gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm, and the person with criminal negligence:

- Failed to secure the firearm; or
- Left the firearm in a place to which the person knew or should have known the child would gain access

The penalty for allowing a child access to a firearm can range from a Class C misdemeanor (punishable by a \$500 fine) to a Class A misdemeanor (punishable by a \$4000 fine, a year in jail, or a combination of the two).

Texas exempts the purchase of firearm safety equipment from [Texas Sales and Use Tax](#).

**Remember, a gun should be stored unloaded in a safe or locked container, with ammunition stored elsewhere.** You can learn more and find additional resources from the Texas Department of Public Safety at <https://safegunstoragegetexas.com>.

**Safe gun storage is critical to preventing suicide, unintentional shootings, and other tragedies.**

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Porterie, Superintendent of Schools  
Port Arthur ISD  
409-989-6100

# TALKING TO OTHERS ABOUT GUN SAFETY



## TALK TO OTHER PARENTS

About one-third of homes with children have at least one firearm – and many of those guns are both unlocked and loaded. It is important to keep your child away from firearms. But parents are often uncomfortable having a conversation about gun safety with others. Remember, you're just trying to keep your child safe. The best way to do that is to find out whether there is a firearm and how it is being stored in any home where your child goes to play.

### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ★ Don't be confrontational. Be respectful.
- ★ Make sure you're completely comfortable with the person's answers before you let your child stay with them.
- ★ There is no harm in asking. There is potentially more harm in not asking.
- ★ Most parents, including gun owners, won't mind your questions at all.

### SOME WAYS YOU CAN APPROACH THE SUBJECT

- ★ "My child is very curious and gets into everything. I'm worried about what would happen if he came across a gun..."
- ★ "All of us in the PTA (or in our church group, etc.) have committed to making sure our children are safe. So, I've gotten in the habit of asking everyone..."
- ★ "(Name of your child) has never been to your house before; can you tell us more about what it will be like?"
- ★ "We don't let our kids watch too much television or drink too much soda. (List other concerns.) Here are more serious concerns I have..."

### TALK TO YOUR KIDS

Children are curious and will have questions about guns. Whether there is a firearm in your home or not, it is important to talk to your child about the rules of gun safety. There may be a situation where they see a gun and you are not around. They should know how to act.

Choose a time and place where they won't be distracted to have the conversation. Consider their age when you are talking to your child about gun safety. Ask them what they already know, and encourage them to ask questions. Don't be afraid to talk to them again to make sure they remember.

### TALK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

As important as it is to keep firearms away from the wrong hands, it's also important to talk to your fellow Texans about safe gun storage. You can talk to others and share our resources about gun safety at group or community events, PTA meetings, religious organizations, HOA meetings, or other gatherings. The more people know about how to safely store firearms, the more we can KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!

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**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!**

**[SafeGunStorageTexas.com](http://SafeGunStorageTexas.com)**