

Operational Services

Exhibit - Letter to Parents/Guardians About Safe Firearm Storage

Optional. This letter is adapted from a template developed by the U.S. Dept. of Education Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center, available at: <https://rems.ed.gov/docs/Safe-Firearm-Storage>.

On District letterhead

Date

Re: Safe Firearm Storage

Dear Parents/Guardians:

All students and members of our school community deserve to feel safe, welcomed, and included. It is on all of us to work together to prevent firearm violence and to avoid the harm and tragedy that shootings of any kind can cause in the spaces in which we live, learn, work, and play.

Safe firearm storage is one of many preventative actions that you can take to keep our school community and school buildings and grounds safe. When firearms are stored safely, it can help prevent them from getting into the hands of children and teens who may use them to, intentionally or unintentionally, harm themselves or others. Safe storage can go a long way in preventing lives from being lost or permanently altered. If you have firearms in your home or if your child spends time in a space where firearms are present, there are important steps that can be taken to keep firearms secured and out of reach of unintended users.

Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths: A Problem We Must Solve Together

Firearm-related injuries and deaths are a public health crisis that communities across the nation face every day:

- Since 2018, there have been more than 100 school shooting incidents per year in our country and those numbers have steadily increased.
- Approximately three-quarters of perpetrators in school-based active shooter situations acquired their firearm from the home of a parent/guardian or close relative. This illustrates the connection between your role as parents/guardians and the District's role in keeping students safe while at school.
- However, this issue goes beyond school-based active shooter situations and includes a variety of firearm injury types, including interpersonal violence, suicide, and unintentional fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries.
- More than four million children live in a household with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm. Studies have found that households with both locked firearms and locked ammunition have significantly lower risks of self-inflicted firearm injuries and even lower risks of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens compared to households that did not safely store firearms.

Safe Firearm Storage: Actions to Take to Keep Our Communities Safe

Safe firearm storage can help prevent and minimize the risk of firearm-related deaths and injuries. Everyone, both firearm owners and non-owners, has a role to play in building awareness of safe, responsible firearm storage. Below are simple, highly effective practices that can help to reduce

firearm-related incidents in our community and help protect our children. In addition to these practices, it is important to also engage children and teens in conversations about the dangers associated with using firearms and what to do and not do in the event they access a firearm, to prevent fatal or non-fatal injuries.

- **Safely Store Firearms:** Store firearms - always unloaded - in a tamper-proof locked cabinet, box, safe, firearm vault, or storage case that children or other unauthorized adults cannot access.
- **Safely Store Ammunition:** Store ammunition in a separate, tamper-proof locked cabinet, safe, firearm vault, or storage case that children or other unauthorized adults cannot access.
- **Secure Firearms:** Use trigger locks or cable locks to prevent a firearm from firing.
 - Trigger locks use a mechanism that clamps down around the trigger or trigger housing to prevent it from being pressed. Note: trigger locks should not be installed on loaded firearms.
 - Cable locks use a cable that is threaded through the barrel or action of a firearm to prevent it from firing.

For more information about safe firearm storage, please see the following links:

Safe Storage Fact Sheet, U.S. Dept. of Justice, at: www.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/media/document/safe_storage_fact_sheet.pdf

Secure Gun Storage Resources, Be SMART, at: <https://besmartforkids.org/secure-gun-storage/resources/>

Securing Your Firearm, Project Child Safe, at: <https://projectchildsafe.org/securing-your-firearm/>

We can all work together to promote awareness about how we can protect our children and our school community by safely storing firearms. Thank you for being a partner in these efforts, and for helping reduce firearm-related injury and deaths in our community.

Sincerely,

Superintendent

May 2024