



## Be SMART in Schools

More than ever, we've seen school shootings and incidents of gun violence in schools covered in the media, or experienced it in our communities. We are all too familiar with educators, students and schools grappling with the aftermath of a tragic incident. The issue of gun violence in schools has instilled fear in parents, educators and leaders in our community—but we *can* take action together to help keep our schools safer. One important place to start is by practicing and encouraging responsible gun storage in every home.

### Facts About Gun Violence in Schools

- Unsecured firearms are often used in school gun violence. The majority of school shooters under the age of 18—78 percent—**obtained the gun(s) from their home** or the homes of their relatives or friends.<sup>1</sup>
- School shooters were also likely to have a connection to the school; **56 percent of shooters were associated with the school** where the gunfire occurred, the majority of whom were current or former students.<sup>2</sup> For active shooters, the number is ever higher; according to another examination of gun violence in schools, **75 percent of active shooters in schools were current or former students of the school.**<sup>3</sup>
- Gun violence in schools includes not only mass shootings, homicides, and assaults, but also unintentional discharges, self-harm injuries, and suicide deaths using a firearm.<sup>4</sup>

### Safety Starts at Home

Throughout the US, an estimated 13 million households with children under the age of 18 contain at least one gun,<sup>5</sup> and one study found that the majority of children in gun-owning households knew where the gun was stored.<sup>6</sup> Not all of these firearms are stored securely: approximately 4.6 million children live in a household with at least one gun that is stored loaded and unlocked.<sup>7</sup>

**According to the US Secret Service, addressing student access to guns is a critical component of any school-based threat assessment intervention plan.**<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Everytown for Gun Safety. Keeping our schools safe: a plan to stop mass shootings and end gun violence in American schools. <https://every.tw/2HjK9cu>. February 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> New York City Police Department. Active shooters: Recommendation and analysis for risk mitigation. 2016. <https://on.nyc.gov/2GIEbl1>. Everytown's analysis doesn't require a definition of "active shooter," but as used in this report generally, we are referring to shooters actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people at a school.

<sup>4</sup> Everytown for Gun Safety. Keeping our schools safe: a plan to stop mass shootings and end gun violence in American schools. <https://every.tw/2HjK9cu>. February 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Azrael D, Cohen J, Salhi C, Miller M. Firearm storage in gun-owning households with children: results of a 2015 national survey. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2018;95(3): 295-304.

<sup>6</sup> Baxley F, Miller M. Parental misperceptions about children and firearms. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. 2006;160(5): 542-547.

<sup>7</sup> Azrael D, Cohen J, Salhi C, Miller M. Firearm storage in gun-owning households with children: results of a 2015 national survey. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2018;95(3): 295-304.

<sup>8</sup> National Threat Assessment Center. Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: an operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. United States Secret Service and U.S. Department of Homeland Security. <https://bit.ly/2NKlwqD>. July, 2018.



Responsible storage—storing guns locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition—can be an important way to keep schools safer from gun violence:

- One study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with a 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers, compared to those that locked neither.<sup>9</sup>
- Another study estimated that if more adults locked up their guns, up to one-third of gun suicides and unintentional deaths among youth could be prevented—saving an estimated 251 lives in a single year.<sup>10</sup>

While these studies looked at gun violence in homes and not in schools, most kids under the age of 18 who bring guns to school obtain them from their homes or the homes of relatives or friends. Responsible storage is a way to prevent these incidents.

### **Be SMART: Promoting Responsible Gun Storage in Our Community**

The **Be SMART campaign**, a program of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, was developed to reduce the deaths, injuries and trauma that result when children gain access to unsecured firearms. The program emphasizes that responsible storage is always the adult's responsibility, and encourages individuals to take five simple steps to keep kids and families safer:

**Secure** guns in homes and vehicles, **Model** responsible behavior around guns, **Ask** about the presence of guns in other homes, **Recognize** the role of guns in suicide, and **Tell** your peers to Be SMART.

Be SMART is neutral on the topic of gun ownership; it does not encourage or discourage individuals from owning guns. It also does not advocate for changes to gun laws. Rather, it emphasizes the power of each and every adult to take agency over the safety of children and teens.

### **Bring Be SMART to Your School Community**

- **Distribute Be SMART** materials to all parents in the school community
- Add **online Be SMART links** and resources for the school community
- Offer **Be SMART Presentations** to adult members of the community

As parents, educators and leaders in our community, we are all responsible for keeping our schools safe. By committing to Be SMART, we all can take an important step towards protecting our kids and our school.

---

<sup>9</sup> Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional injuries. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2006;293(6): 707-714.

<sup>10</sup> Monuteaux MC, Azrael D, Miller M. Association of increased safe household firearm storage with firearm suicide and unintentional death among US youths. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 2019.1078.

**MOMS DEMAND ACTION / EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY**  
**Model Safe Storage Resolution**  
**California School Boards Responsible Storage Notification Resolution**

Whereas, Evidence strongly suggests that responsible firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep schools and students safe;

Whereas, An estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm;

Whereas, Every year, nearly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else. That's roughly one unintentional shooting per day, and 77 percent of these incidents take place inside a home;

Whereas, Another 590 children die by gun suicide each year, most often using guns belonging to a family member;

Whereas, In incidents of gun violence on school grounds, 79 percent of active shooters are current students or recent graduates, and 78 percent of shooters under the age of 18 obtained their guns from their own home, a relative's home, or from friends;

Whereas, Research shows that responsible firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens;

Whereas, The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center recommends the importance of appropriate storage of weapons because many school attackers used firearms acquired from their homes;

Whereas, Across the country, lawmakers, community members, and local leaders are working together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America's Be SMART program, that is endorsed by the National PTA, and encourages secure gun storage practices and highlight the public safety risks of unsecured guns;

Whereas, District schools are required to comply with California Education Code Section 32280- 9, which mandates the preparation of school safety plans;

Whereas, These plans address violence prevention, emergency preparedness, traffic safety and crisis intervention;

Whereas, Keeping students, teachers and staff safe from the threat of gun violence should be the responsibility of all adult stakeholders at each of our school sites;

Whereas, An estimated 30 percent of adults in California own a firearm;

Whereas, State (and local) law criminalize unsafe storage of firearms where minors may be present;

Whereas, In order to continue with preventative measures to increase student and school safety we must act now; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Board directs the Superintendent and staff to update the Student Handbook to include information about parents' legal duties to responsibly store firearms;

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to create an appropriate letter, in English and Spanish, to parents and guardians that explains the importance of responsible gun storage and the legal obligations to protect minors from accessing irresponsibly stored guns, to be included in annual registration materials at each school site, and requiring a signature acknowledging awareness of responsible gun storage responsibilities; and, be it finally;

Resolved, That the Board and the Superintendent will continue to work with local law enforcement agencies, health agencies and non-profits to collaborate and increase efforts to inform District parents of their duty to responsibly store firearms in their homes.

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
LOS ANGELES SCHOOL POLICE DEPARTMENT



AUSTIN DEUTHER  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Office of the Chief

126 North Broadway Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90012  
Telephone: (213) 302-4608 - Fax: (213) 302-8876



STEVEN K. ZIPPERMAN  
CHIEF OF POLICE

September 9, 2019

RE: INFORMATION ABOUT PARENT/GUARDIAN LEGAL DUTIES CONCERNING SAFE GUN STORAGE

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Providing our students and staff with a safe educational environment remains one of our top priorities. We are all aware of incidents of gun violence in our surrounding communities, and across the nation. In California each year, an average of 27 children under the age of 18 have died by suicide with a gun that belonged to someone at home. In the majority of these gun-related incidents, the minor gained access to a lawfully purchased gun from their residence or the residence of a relative. Los Angeles Unified takes steps to ensure that campuses are safe from the threat of gun violence. Any student found in possession of a firearm on campus is subject to immediate arrest, suspension and expulsion proceedings. To further our efforts to protect students against firearms, and as a courtesy to our families, we would like to bring to your attention the legal obligations to protect minors from negligent gun storage. Please see two of the gun storage laws summarized below:

Safe Storage of Handguns, Los Angeles Municipal Code section 55.21

This City of Los Angeles statute makes it a crime to have a handgun within a residence unless the handgun is stored in a locked container or disabled with a trigger lock approved by the California Department of Justice.

Criminal Storage of a Firearm, California Penal Code section 25100(A)

This State statute makes it a crime to store a loaded firearm on any premises under your control, knowing or reasonably should have known, a child is likely to gain access to the firearm; and the child gains access causing death or great bodily injury.

Feel free to retrieve the full text of the above laws for further details.

Very truly yours,

STEVEN K. ZIPPERMAN  
Chief of Police

----- CUT HERE AND RETURN TO YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL -----

SAFE GUN STORAGE - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Please sign below acknowledging receipt of this information.

Student Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_