



Secure Firearm Storage Notification Resolution

May 5, 2023

One of the Salem Public School District's highest priorities is school safety. While we focus on all areas of safety, this particular resolution has a focus on gun violence prevention through the leadership of the district, information sharing, empowerment, and education of our school community.

Whereas, The safety and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff is a top priority of Salem Public Schools;

Whereas, In the United States, gun violence is the leading cause of death in children and teens;¹

Whereas, Evidence strongly suggests that secure 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;²

Whereas, Every year, roughly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else,³ about one unintentional shooting per day, and 70 percent of these incidents take place inside a home;⁴

Whereas, 1200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year⁵ and over 80 percent of children under age 18 who died by firearm suicide used a gun belonging to a family member;⁶

Whereas, Research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to a 78 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens;⁷

Whereas, In incidents of gun violence on school grounds, up to 80 percent of shooters under the age of 18 obtained their guns from their own home or that of relatives or friends;⁸

Whereas, the US 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, 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, Across the country, lawmakers, community members and local leaders are working



together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as the Be SMART Program, which is endorsed by the National PTA and encourages secure gun storage practices and highlights the public safety risks of unsecured guns;

Whereas, Secure storage of firearms is a legal requirement in Massachusetts pursuant to G.L. Chapter 140, sections 131L and 131C, and failure to comply with secure storage laws can lead to criminal prosecution, jail time, fines, and/or revocation of FID card or license, depending on the offense;

Whereas, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends storing firearms unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition;

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

Resolved, That the Salem School Committee directs the Superintendent and staff to update the Student Handbook to include information about parents' legal obligations regarding the secure storage of firearms;

Resolved, That the School Committee directs the Superintendent and staff to create an appropriate direct communication in the form of a letter or email to parents and guardians, that explains the importance of secure firearm storage to protect minors from accessing unsecured firearms, and their legal obligations consistent with Massachusetts safe storage law. Notification will be done as soon as possible, and included on the district website and in annual registration materials at each school site.

Resolved, the Salem School Committee and the Superintendent will continue to work with local law enforcement agencies, health agencies and non-profit organizations to collaborate and increase efforts to inform district parents, guardians, and caregivers of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes and vehicles.

Signed By:

Mr. Manny Cruz

Ms. Beth Anne Cornell

Ms. Mary Manning

Acting Mayor Robert McCarthy

Ms. Amanda Campbell

Dr. Kristin Pangallo

Ms. Veronica Miranda



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Where belonging leads to opportunity.

References:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death, Injury Mechanism & All Other Leading Causes. Data from 2020. Analysis includes children and teens aged 1 to 19.

² Matthew Miller and Deborah Azrael, "Firearm Storage in US Households with Children: Findings from the 2021 National Firearm Survey," JAMA Network Open 5, no. 2 (2022): e2148823, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.48823>

³ Everytown for Gun Safety. #NotAnAccident Index. 2020.
<https://everytownresearch.org/maps/notanaccident/> Analysis includes incidents that occurred between 2015 and 2019.

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety. #NotAnAccident Index. 2020.
<https://everytownresearch.org/maps/notanaccident/>. Analysis includes homes of the shooter, the victim, relatives' homes, friends' homes, and "other" homes.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using five years of the most recent available data: 2016 to 2020. Children and teens aged 0 to 19.

⁶ Johnson RM, Barber C, Azrael D, Clark DE, Hemenway D. Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicides? Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior. 2010;40(6):609-611.