

RESOLUTIONS ON STUDENT SAFETY

RESOLUTION 3: SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

(Sponsored by the Framingham School Committee)

WHEREAS safety and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff is a top priority in schools and keeping them safe from the threat of gun violence should be the responsibility of all adult stakeholders at each of our school sites; and

WHEREAS in the United States, gun violence is the leading cause of death in children and teens¹, and

WHEREAS approximately 1200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, and over 80 percent of children under age 18 who died by firearm suicide used a gun belonging to a family member, and

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 friends³; and

WHEREAS an estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm² and every year²; and

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 teens⁷; and

WHEREAS evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep schools and students safe⁶;

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; and

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; and

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 offence; and

WHEREAS the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends storing firearms unloaded and locked, with ammunition locked separately to reduce risks of injury to children; ⁹

WHEREAS in order to continue with preventive measures to increase student and school safety we must act now.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC recommends all districts direct their Superintendent and staff to create an appropriate communication to parents and guardians that explains the importance of secure firearm storage to protect children and teens from unauthorized access to unsecured firearms, and their legal obligations consistent with Massachusetts safe storage law.

FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urges other communities to work with their local law enforcement agencies, health agencies and non-profit organizations to collaborate and increase efforts to inform District parents and guardians of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes and vehicles.

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. Study defined children as under the age of 18.
7. Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, American Federation of Teachers, and National Education Association, "Keeping Our Schools Safe: A Plan for Preventing Mass Shootings and Ending All Gun Violence in American Schools," 2020. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/preventing-gunviolence-in-american-schools/>
8. Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional injuries. JAMA. 2005; 293(6):707-714.
9. M.J. Bull, et al., "Firearm-related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population," Pediatrics 105, no. 4 (2000): 888-895.