

Resolution on the Safe Storage of Firearms Stoneham Public Schools

One of the Stoneham 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.

The Stoneham Public School District is aware that in the United States, gun violence is the leading cause of death in children and teens.¹ An estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm² and every year, roughly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else.³ That's about one unintentional shooting per day, and 70 percent of these incidents take place inside a home.⁴ Another 1200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year,⁵ and over 80 percent of children under age 18 [who died by firearm suicide used a gun belonging to a family member](#).⁶ 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 In incidents of gun violence on school grounds, the US Secret Service found that 76 percent of shooters under age 18 acquired their firearm from the home of a parent, or that of relatives or friends.⁸

Whereas, Safety and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff is a top priority of Stoneham Public 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;

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

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, 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 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 the 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 and guardians of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes and vehicles.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Stoneham School Committee on this second day of March, 2023, by the following vote: Yeas: 4, Nays 0.

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 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.
- ⁸ National Threat Assessment Center, "Protecting America's Schools: A US Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence," US Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security, 2019. <https://bit.ly/2U7vnwa>
- ⁹ M.J. Bull, et al., "Firearm-related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population," *Pediatrics* 105, no. 4 (2000): 888-895.