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, students 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 secure gun storage in every home.

Facts About Gun Violence in Schools

● Unsecured firearms are often used in school gun violence. The US Secret Service found that three in four school shooters used a firearm they took from a parent's or close relative's home.¹

● Shooters were also likely to have a connection to the school. An NYPD study of active shooters at K–12 schools found that in 75 percent of incidents the shooter or shooters were school-age and were current or former students.² For mass shooters, the number is even higher; according to another examination of gun violence in schools, 91 percent of mass school shooters and attempted mass school shooters were current or former students of the school.³

● 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.⁴

Safety Starts at Home

Throughout the US, an estimated 13 million households with children under the age of 18 contain at least one gun,⁵ and one study found that the majority of children in gun-owning households knew where the gun was stored.⁶ 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.⁷

According to the US Secret Service, addressing student access to guns is a critical component of any school-based threat assessment intervention plan.⁸ Secure storage—storing guns unloaded, locked, 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.⁹

● 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.¹⁰

For more information or to get involved visit BeSMARTforKids.org
Be SMART is a program of Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund
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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. Secure storage is a way to prevent these incidents.

Be SMART: Promoting Secure Gun Storage in Our Community
The Be SMART campaign, a program of Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, was developed to reduce the deaths, injuries, and trauma that result when children gain access to unsecured firearms. The program emphasizes that secure 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 schools.


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