



Superintendent of Schools
Alberto M. Carvalho

Miami-Dade County School Board
Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Susie V. Castillo
Carlos L. Curbelo
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman
Dr. Wilbert "Tee" Holloway
Dr. Marta Pérez
Raquel A. Regalado

November 4, 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians:

One of the most important fundamental goals of this school District is to educate our students so that they can attain the necessary skills to achieve academic success and compete in a global economy. Another equally important goal is to keep our students safe and promote any initiative that supports safety at school, at home, and in the community. According to federal statistics, there are guns in approximately half of all households. Children as young as three years may be strong enough to pull the trigger on a handgun. On average, every other day, an American child under the age of 10 is killed or seriously injured by a gun.

Even if no one in your family owns a gun, chances are that someone you know does. Your child could come in contact with a gun at a neighbor's, friends, or family member's house, when playing with friends, or under other circumstances outside of your home. Each year, children are seriously injured or die from an unintentional firearm accident which occurred when children were playing with guns.

It is critical that your child knows what to do if he or she encounters a firearm anywhere. On November 17, 2014, all elementary students in grades one through five will take a Gun Safety Awareness pledge at school along with us, their teachers, school site administrators, law enforcement, and community stakeholders. We encourage parents/guardians to also take the time to assess your own home situation with regards to gun safety, and also to reinforce the following gun safety tips with your child.

How to Protect Your Child from Gun Injury If You Own A Gun

- For those families who keep a gun in the home, here are some Safety Tips to help protect children and teens from accidental firearm injury or death.
 - Keep the gun locked or use a trigger lock on the gun.
 - Hide the keys to the locked firearm and ammunition storage boxes.
 - Only parents should know the location of the gun storage.
 - Check with your local police for advice about safe storage and gun locks.
 - When handling or cleaning a gun, never leave it unattended, not even for a moment.

November 4, 2014

How to Protect and Reduce Your Child's Risk of Gun Injury

- o Teach your children never to touch guns. Make sure they know that guns can be dangerous.
- o Even if you do not own a gun, ask your neighbors, friends, and family if they own a gun before your child visits their homes. If they do, ask questions to determine if the guns are stored safely.
 - If you believe the gun is stored safely in the home, then it is up to you, the parent/guardian, to determine whether or not your child can visit the home.
 - If you do not believe the gun is stored safely, then you may want to keep your child away from the home.
- o Talk with your children about the risk of firearm injury outside the home, in places they may visit or play.
- o Do you know which of your children's friends have guns in their homes? Your child might—and might even know where they are kept.
- o Talk with your children about guns and violence and about the differences between television or video game violence and real life violence.

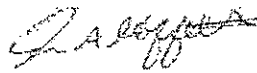
Review and Reinforce Gun Safety Awareness Tips With Your Child

- o If you see a gun: STOP!
- o Don't Touch
- o Leave the Area
- o Tell an Adult

It is our hope that, through the collaboration of school, community, and home, we can keep our children safe. For additional information regarding gun safety, please visit www.mdspolice.com and www.youthcrimewatch-miamidade.org.

Sincerely,

Miami-Dade Schools Police Department



Ian A. Moffett

Chief of Police and District Security

IAM:meh

L#096

cc: All work locations