October 19, 2026

Dear Holt Public Schools Families, Guardians, and Caregivers,

Every student and every member of our school community deserves to feel safe, welcomed, and included. Keeping our children safe is not the work of one person or one office. It belongs to all of us, and that is why I want to talk with you directly about something that matters a great deal: the safe storage of firearms.

Safe storage is one of the most effective steps any household can take to protect children and teens. When firearms are locked up and out of reach, young people are far less likely to use them to harm themselves or others, whether by accident or on purpose. If you have firearms in your home, or if your child spends time in a home where firearms are present, there are simple steps that can keep those firearms secured and away from anyone who should not have them.

Why This Matters

Firearm-related injuries and deaths are a public health crisis that communities across our nation face every day:

- Since 2018, there have been more than 100 school shooting incidents per year in our country, and those numbers have steadily increased.[1]
- Approximately three-quarters of perpetrators in school-based attacks acquired their firearm from the home of a parent or close relative.[2] That is the clearest possible picture of how closely the work of our families and the work of our schools are connected.
- The concern goes well beyond school attacks. It includes interpersonal violence, suicide, and unintentional fatal and nonfatal injuries.[3]
- More than 4 million children live in a household with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm.[4] Studies have found that households that lock both firearms and ammunition have significantly lower risks of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens.[5]

What Michigan Law Requires

Since February 13, 2024, Michigan law has required firearm owners to securely store firearms wherever minors are present or likely to be present.[6] The law applies to all firearms, loaded or unloaded, and applies whether a firearm is kept in your own home or brought to another location. When a child gains access to an improperly stored firearm and someone is hurt, the owner can face serious criminal penalties. Please take a few minutes to review the requirements and make sure your household is in compliance.

Steps You Can Take Today

Everyone, whether or not you own a firearm, has a role in building awareness of safe, responsible storage. These simple, highly effective practices help protect our kids:

- **Store firearms unloaded and locked.** Use a tamper-proof locked cabinet, safe, firearm vault, or storage case that children and unauthorized adults cannot access.
- **Lock ammunition separately.** Keep it in its own locked container, apart from the firearm.
- **Use a locking device.** A cable lock threads through the barrel or action to prevent firing; a trigger lock clamps around the trigger so it cannot be pulled. Never install a trigger lock on a loaded firearm. Ask your local law enforcement agency whether free cable locks are available.
- **Ask before a visit.** Before your child spends time at another home, it is okay to ask whether there are firearms in the house and how they are stored.
- **Talk with your children.** Make sure they know that if they ever see or find a firearm, they should not touch it, should leave the area, and should tell an adult right away.

Holt Public Schools remains fully committed to the safety of our students, staff, and families. I am grateful for your partnership in this work. Together, we can protect our children, prevent tragedies before they happen, and keep our schools and our community places where every young person can learn, grow, and thrive.

Sincerely,

Hal Heard
Superintendent, Holt Public Schools

Helpful Resources

Please feel free to read and share these with family, friends, and neighbors.

- Michigan Safe Storage Law (MCL 28.429), Michigan Legislature; and the Firearm Prevention Resource Library, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Safe Firearm Storage Toolkit, University of Michigan Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention
- Safe Firearm Storage Fact Sheet, U.S. Department of Justice
- Preventing Mass Attacks in Our Communities, U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center
- Securing Your Firearm and Explaining Gun Safety to Kids, Project ChildSafe
- Be SMART for Kids: Secure Gun Storage resources, Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund
- Secure Storage of Lethal Means: Keeping Children and Families Safe, Sandy Hook Promise
- End Family Fire, Brady United Against Gun Violence

Resources are listed for convenience. Inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by Holt Public Schools.

Sources

1. Riedman, D. (2023). *K-12 School Shooting Database.* https://k12ssdb.org/all-shootings

2. National Threat Assessment Center. (2019). *Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence.* U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

3. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. (2023). *Fast Facts: Firearm Violence and Injury Prevention.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

4. Miller, M., & Azrael, D. (2022). Firearm Storage in U.S. Households With Children: Findings From the 2021 National Firearm Survey. *JAMA Network Open, 5*(2), e2148823.

5. Grossman, D.C., et al. (2005). Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries. *JAMA, 293*(6), 707-714.

6. Michigan Compiled Laws 28.429 (Public Acts 16 and 17 of 2023), effective February 13, 2024.

Adapted from a template letter developed by the REMS TA Center for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools.