

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mrs. Stephanie Snyder, Superintendent & Supervisor of Special Services
Mrs. Susan Wardell, Principal/Curriculum & 504 Coordinator

908-995-2401
www.hollandschool.org

October 18, 2024

Dear Parent and Guardians:

October 16th through the 20th schools in New Jersey recognize School Violence Awareness week. In 2023, in the United States, nearly 400 children unintentionally shot themselves or another person, and there were 306 school violence events involving a gun, 2566 children died as a result of homicide involving a firearm. What's more, 78 percent of school shooters obtain their guns from their own home, a relative's home, or the home of a friend. Any responsible parent who is aware of these statistics surrounding guns and children surely would want to exercise secure gun storage practices. This is not an issue regarding gun owners' rights. This is an opportunity for the school board, school administration and the Holland Township Police to get vital information into the hands of every parent in order to better protect all of our children.

We cannot assume that these facts are known, nor can we assume that every parent recognizes the need for proper gun storage and limiting minors' accessibility to guns. Gun violence in schools have been a tragic and challenging situation across the United States since the beginning of this century. The continued effects of COVID-19 on depression and isolation amongst school-aged children only threatens to exacerbate the issue.

Providing our students and staff with a safe educational environment remains one of our top priorities. Holland Township School continues to update safety protocol and add safety features to our building. We are all aware of incidents of gun violence. To further our efforts to protect students against firearms, and as a courtesy to our families, we would like to bring your attention to legal obligations to protect minors from negligent gun storage.

Please see New Jersey Statute for storage of firearms(2C:58-15):

2C:58-15. Minor's access to a loaded firearm; penalty, conditions

1. a. A person who knows or reasonably should know that a minor is likely to gain access to a loaded firearm at a premises under the person's control commits a disorderly persons offense if a minor gains access to the firearm, unless the person:

1. Stores the firearm in a securely locked box or container;
2. Stores the firearm in a location which a reasonable person would believe to be secure; or

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3. Secures the firearm with a trigger lock.
 - a. This section shall not apply:
 - i. To activities authorized by section 14 of P.L.1979, c.179, (C.2C:58-6.1), concerning the lawful use of a firearm by a minor; or
 - ii. Under circumstances where a minor obtained a firearm as a result of an unlawful entry by any person.
 - iii. As used in this act, "minor" means a person under the age of 16. L.1991,c.397,s.1.

Additionally, the Holland Township Police participate in the Project Childsafe program which committed to promoting genuine firearms safety through the distribution of safety education messages and free firearm safety kits to communities across the U.S. If you are interested in receiving a free firearm safety kit please contact the HTPD.

If sending this letter home causes even one parent to pause and rethink gun safety in the home, if it saves the life of even one child, it will be more than worth it. It is the civic duty and the moral obligation of the school board to get this information into the hands of parents with an acknowledgement that it has been read. If ever you question your family's safety please contact the Holland Township Police.

We are one community. It takes harnessing the knowledge and skills of us all in order to move the group forward. Let's get this vital information to the people who need it the most, and let's make sure it is actually seen, in order to protect all of our children.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Snyder
Superintendent

SS/ld