



Wise County Public Schools

Annual Parent Notification: Safe Storage of Prescription Medications and Firearms

Wise County Public Schools is committed to the safety and well-being of our students and families. In accordance with Virginia law and Wise County School Board Policy, we are providing families with information about the importance of safely and securely storing prescription medications and firearms in the home.

Safe Storage of Prescription Medications

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to securely store all prescription medications so they are not accessible to children or adolescents.

Families should consider the following safety practices:

- Keep prescription medications in a secure or locked location that children and adolescents cannot access.
- Keep medications in their original, properly labeled containers.
- Monitor the amount of medication in the home, particularly medications that may be misused.
- Properly dispose of medications that are expired or no longer needed.
- Never share prescription medications with another person.

The Virginia Department of Health provides additional information regarding medication safety and poisoning prevention. If you believe a poisoning or accidental medication ingestion has occurred, contact the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222.

Safe Storage of Firearms

Virginia law establishes requirements for the safe storage of firearms in homes where minors or individuals prohibited from possessing firearms are present.

Virginia law requires a firearm in such a residence to be stored in a locked container, compartment, or cabinet inaccessible to the minor or prohibited person,



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or to be rendered incapable of being fired through the use of an appropriate gun-locking device.

The Virginia Department of Health recommends additional precautions, including:

- Store firearms unloaded and locked.
- Use a firearm safe, locked box, trigger lock, or chamber lock.
- Store and lock ammunition separately from firearms.
- Ensure children and adolescents cannot access keys, combinations, or other means of opening firearm storage devices.

Safe firearm storage can help prevent accidental shootings, firearm injuries, suicide, and unauthorized access by children and adolescents.

Firearm Injury and Youth Safety

Firearm injuries remain a significant cause of injury and death among children and adolescents in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that firearm injuries are a leading cause of death among children and teenagers.

CDC research has also found that unsecured firearms, including firearms stored loaded or unlocked, are associated with an increased risk of unintentional firearm injuries and deaths involving children.

Firearms also play a significant role in suicide deaths. Safe storage is particularly important when a child or other member of the household is experiencing depression, suicidal thoughts, significant emotional distress, or another behavioral health crisis.

When You Are Concerned About a Child

Parents and caregivers should take concerns about a child's safety, threats of self-harm, suicidal thoughts, or threats toward others seriously.



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If you have concerns about your child's emotional or behavioral health, please contact your child's school counselor, administrator, healthcare provider, or another qualified mental health professional.

For an immediate emergency or danger, call 911.

Families may also access suicide prevention and behavioral health resources through the Virginia Department of Health and other local and state behavioral health providers.

Additional Resources

Parents and guardians can find additional information from:

- Virginia Department of Health — Firearm Injury Prevention
- Virginia Department of Health — Medication Safety and Poisoning Prevention
- Virginia Lock & Talk — Safe storage of firearms and medications and suicide prevention resources
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — Firearm Injury and Death Prevention
- Virginia Legislative Information System — Virginia firearm laws

Wise County Public Schools provides this annual notification as part of our continuing commitment to student safety and in accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-79.3 and Wise County School Board Policy.