

GUN SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Given National PTA's history of advocacy for the safety of children and youth, National PTA supports federal efforts to protect children and youth from gun violence. National PTA also advocates restricting access to guns from persons who may endanger public safety.

School safety is a critical priority for all parents, educators, students and community members that cannot be taken for granted. We must make every attempt to reduce violence, especially incidents that involve firearms. National PTA recognizes the importance of parent involvement in the decision-making process in the development and implementation of school safety policies, including crisis response plans.

National PTA recognizes the importance of a safe learning environment in attaining the highest level of student learning and achievement. National PTA believes the most effective day-to-day school climate to be gun-free, but defers to local collaborative decision-making to allow for the presence of law enforcement deployed in community-oriented policing.

Examples of ways to improve youth safety and to restrict guns to only responsible owners include advocating for the following:

- gun safety locks and other safety devices to prevent young children from accidentally discharging a gun
- alternative educational settings for youth who have brought a firearm to school, along with appropriate evaluation and counseling
- restrict Internet gun sales, including kits that can be used to make/modify guns
- enforce federal and state minimum age requirements for handgun purchases
- raise the minimum age to 21 to be allowed to buy a handgun from non-licensed dealers
- allow at least three business days to conduct background checks
- require non-licensed dealers to conduct background checks and fill out proper paperwork so that guns can be traced
- increase penalties for the transfer of handguns or semiautomatic assault weapons to juveniles for use in a crime
- revoke the license of dealers who knowingly sell to minors
- establish education programs to teach students, parents, and community members about gun safety and violence prevention
- prevent juveniles who commit violent crimes from buying guns as adults

- support state and federal funding initiatives for the research of the causes and effects of gun violence

These and other measures are some of the ways National PTA believes that gun violence can be decreased in order to make our schools, as well as our communities, safer. National PTA believes we must enact legislation that will reduce gun violence and help protect all children and youth.

Adopted: by the 1999 Board of Directors

Amended: by the 2013 Board of Directors

Amended: by the 2016 Board of Directors