



Scott County Public Schools

Virginia Connections Academy

Multi-Division Online Provider



Annual Parent Notification: Safe Storage of Prescription Medications and Firearms

Scott County Public Schools is committed to the safety and well-being of our students and families. In accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-79.3, 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. Proper storage and disposal of prescription medication can help prevent accidental poisoning, misuse, and overdose.

To help keep your family safe:

- Store all prescription medications in their original containers with child-resistant caps secured.
- Keep medications out of reach of children and pets.
- Secure prescription narcotics and other controlled medications in a locked cabinet or drawer.
- 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. This should be done through a local drug take-back program whenever possible. If a drug take-back program is unavailable, follow the medications disposal instructions or safely dispose of medications according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- 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 § 18.2-56.2 establishes requirements for the safe storage of firearms in homes where minors or individuals prohibited from possessing firearms are present. It is unlawful to recklessly leave a loaded, unsecured firearm in a manner that endangers the life or safety of a child under the age of 14. The law also requires that children under the age of 12 be supervised by an adult when using a firearm.

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, 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 using a gun safe, lockbox, trigger lock, or chamber lock.
- Store and lock ammunition separately from firearms.
- Remove firearms from the home whenever possible if someone in the household is experiencing depression or suicidal thoughts.
- 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 were the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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.

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.

If you are concerned that a child may be at risk of harming themselves or others, seek assistance immediately by contacting 911, a trusted healthcare provider, mental health professional, or the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988.

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 – [Medication Safety](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — [Firearm Injury and Death Prevention](#)
- U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration – [National Prescription Drug Take Back Program](#)
- Virginia Legislative Information System — [Virginia firearm laws](#)

Scott 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. Thank you for partnering to keep our students and families safe.