



Make your school  
a firearm free zone

## Drawing up a firearm free zone policy for your school

You will need to draw up a draft policy for making sure your school is a firearm free zone (FFZ). On the next few pages you will find some points that you need to keep in mind when drawing up your policy. Use this discussion sheet to get input from all stakeholders in the school community.

A policy should be seen as a contract that all stakeholders agree to. You can even make all stakeholders commit to it by signing it.

A clear policy is:

- ❖ Written
- ❖ Describes all the possible problems
- ❖ Outlines the actions to be taken
- ❖ Outlines who is responsible for each action

### What do you need to keep in mind when drafting an FFZ policy?

#### Access issues

How will you restrict access to the school so you can make sure guns are not brought in to the school? You need to discuss if you will need to fence the school and if you will have one entry point for the school, for example.

Your policy needs to include how you will make sure that:

- No unauthorized person will be allowed on the grounds
- No one will be allowed to go directly to the classrooms
- Designated people will be responsible for opening and closing the gates
- People delivering goods do not carry firearms

#### Firearm free zone

The policy should state clearly that once a school has been declared an FFZ by the minister:

- The school management may not allow guns on the school premises
- Anyone bringing a firearm or ammunition on to the premises can be charged with committing a crime
- Any person storing a firearm or ammunition anywhere in the school, including in a safe, can be charged with committing a crime
- The school will be clearly marked as a firearm free zone with signs at all entrances.

The policy should also outline what the penalty is for disobeying the law.



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### Controlling firearms

- The policy needs to state what will happen if a learner, educator or any other person is found with a gun on the school premises. For example, if any person is found with a firearm on the school premises the matter is to be reported to the principal who will notify the police immediately to confiscate the gun. Will the school immediately prosecute the person?
- What will happen if a learner is found with a gun – for example will the parents be called in to speak to the principal and the police? What disciplinary measures will the school apply – for example will an official warning be given to the learner?
- What will happen if an educator is found with a gun – for example will the District Education Office be informed?
- If a learner or educator feels threatened outside or inside the school and feels they need a gun for protection how will this be dealt with?
- Will you have spot checks from time to time?

### Safety Team

- The policy should describe who will be on the Safety Team and what their role will be in the ongoing maintenance of the FFZ.

### Monitoring

- The policy needs to state how firearm related incidents will be recorded and how ongoing monitoring will take place.

### New admissions

- The policy should describe how the FFZ policy will be introduced to new educators and learners and how they will be called on to adhere to the policy.

### The community

- The policy needs to describe how the fact that the school is an FFZ will be communicated to the broader community.

### Promoting non-violence

- The policy should state how the school will promote the elimination of other weapons, such as knives, in the school.
- The policy should state how educators and learners will use the FFZ to discuss alternatives to violence and conflict resolution in the classroom.
- It should also state how learners and educators who have been exposed to violent trauma such as gun violence will be helped.

**Once you have input from everyone you will need to draw up a draft policy. Once you have a draft policy, share it with everyone in the school. Hold another round of workshops (representative workshops would be best at this point).**

### REMEMBER!

**Make sure that your policy is written clearly so that all members of the school community can understand what it means. Make sure everyone in the school community is involved in commenting on the draft policy!**

(Some of the information on this sheet is adapted from *Safety Now, Building Safe Schools* a Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation Learning Resource)