



If your school does not intend to allow firearms for educational or sporting purposes, a policy is not needed. You may however like to update your general school policies to reflect this stance.

## Firearms policy

- » A firearms policy is designed to keep students and staff safe when firearms are on a school site or if students are to be involved in offsite firearms activities. A policy should clearly outline your obligations under the Arms Act 1983, and Arms Regulations 1992 and help you comply with your requirements under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
- » If your school intends to have a firearms policy, you should note this in your school's health and safety policy and your school's risk register should be updated. An example firearms policy can be found [here](#)
- » Principals (on behalf of their boards) should consult with their community before adopting a firearms policy or amending their health and safety policy.

## Some key roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure your school has sound policies and practices in place, developed in consultation with the local community</li> <li>» Notify parents and gain parent/caregiver consent for events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Approve any event involving firearms</li> <li>» Ensure the principal is aware of their responsibilities</li> <li>» Request incident reports</li> </ul>
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure the board has approved any event involving firearms Understand the hazards/risks associated with each event</li> <li>» Conduct a risk assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Notify all staff and students on school site</li> <li>» Check firearm licences where these are required</li> <li>» Notify Board of Trustees of any incidents</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure their behaviour does not adversely affect the health and safety of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Comply with any reasonable instruction from school leadership to allow them to comply with the Arms Act 1983</li> <li>» Notify the principal of any incident</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure their behaviour does not adversely affect the health and safety of others</li> <li>» Listen to and follow health and safety instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Comply with any reasonable instruction from school leadership to allow them to comply with the Arms Act 1983</li> <li>» Report any dangerous behaviour to a teacher</li> </ul>
Visitors with firearms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensure all firearms are unloaded with the bolt removed (where able)</li> <li>» Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure their behaviour does not adversely affect the health and safety of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» On arrival, report to the principal or nominated person and have firearms licence(s) sighted.</li> <li>» Follow school policies and procedures for firearms</li> <li>» Comply with all requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Arms Act 1983 and Arms Regulations 1992</li> </ul>

## Holding an event – questions to consider:

- » Have you clearly defined how students will be participating in an activity involving firearms?
- » Do you know what sort of firearms are involved and any restrictions that may apply to them?
- » Have you communicated with the parent community and sought appropriate parental permission?
- » Are you assured that ammunition is stored separately from firearms?
- » Will an alternative learning experience be available for students not participating?
- » What is the appropriate storage of firearms on your school grounds or hostel? Have NZ Police checked out the storage facility?
- » When events are held on school premises (eg careers days), have all people carrying a firearm had their licence(s) checked?
- » Have you appointed a member of staff or the Board as the key contact during an event?
- » Have you pre-approved the period of instruction?

## Situations when firearms may be allowed on school premises

- » There are a range of circumstances where boards might choose to allow firearms onto their premises, or have students involved with firearms outside school premises — such as for careers days, work experience or Anzac Day celebrations. Some schools (more likely to be secondary) may operate a gun/shooting club using a local shooting range. Boards may allow the presence or storage of firearms for this purpose. These schools may also participate in inter-school shooting competitions. See pages 5 to 7 of the [Guidelines](#).

## Communicating with parents caregivers, school communities and school visitors

- » Principals writing to parents/caregivers outlining event details and seeking consent should provide sufficient detail to ensure the parental/caregiver can make an informed decision about their child's participation. [See Tool 5: Parent/Caregiver information letter](#).
- » The form should include an option for a parent/caregiver to consent or decline consent for each student. If parents withhold consent, the learning outcomes of the experience should be delivered to the student in some other way. [See Tool 6](#).

## Health and wellbeing considerations

- » You need to consider the increased anxiety about or heightened sensitivity around firearms some students may have. See page 12 of the [Guidelines](#).
- » Hearing, eye and other protective equipment when shooting is strongly recommended. Ventilation should be operated at indoor shooting ranges. See page 12 of the [Guidelines](#).

## Managing risks and risk analysis management/safety plans

- » Active management of risk allows a board to carry out its primary duty of care, as far as is reasonably practicable, to its workers and others. See page 13 of the [Guidelines](#).

## The New Zealand Arms Code: Seven basic safety rules for firearms

**1** Treat every firearm as loaded

**2** Always point firearms in a safe direction

**3** Load a firearm only when ready to fire

**4** Identify your target beyond all doubt

**5** Check your firing zone

**6** Store firearms and ammunition safely

**7** Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms

Learn more about the seven basic rules for firearms here:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/firearms-and-safety/arms-code/seven-firearms-safety-rules>

## Useful links

[Arms Act 1983](#); [Arms Regulations 1992](#), [Arms Code](#) and [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)

[Tool 1: Policy development checklist](#)

[Tool 2: Event checklist](#)

[Tool 3: Example policy/procedure for the safe use and storage of firearms](#)

[Tool 4: Application for firearm storage](#)

[Tool 5: Parental/Caregiver Information Letter](#)

[Tool 6: Parental/Caregiver consent](#)

[Tool 7: Firearms log](#)

[Tool 8: Arms Act 1983](#)