



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

December 16, 2011

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Elementary School Gun Safety Guidelines

In September 2011, the proposed *Elementary School Gun Safety Guidelines and Curriculum* were adopted by the Virginia Board of Education, after being presented for first review in July. They are posted on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Web site at

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/safety_crisis_management/gun_safety/index.shtml.

The development of the guidelines and curriculum is required by § 22.1-204.1. of the *Code of Virginia* (2011), which states:

Local school boards may provide firearm safety education programs for students in the elementary school grades. To assist local school boards electing to provide firearm safety education programs, the Board of Education shall establish curriculum guidelines for a standardized program of firearm safety education for the elementary school grades to promote the protection and safety of children enrolled in the public schools. The curriculum guidelines shall incorporate, among other principles of firearm safety, accident prevention and the rules upon which the Eddie Eagle Gunsafe Program offered by the National Rifle Association is based. Local school boards electing to provide firearm safety education shall offer instruction pursuant to the Board's curriculum guidelines and shall integrate firearm safety education into appropriate subject areas, if feasible, to ensure that every elementary grade student completes the course of study in firearm safety education.

The purpose of the document is to keep students safe by providing guidance and instructional materials based on the rules and principles of firearm safety and accident prevention to teachers and by providing resources for parents. The guidelines and curriculum promote the premise that all community members want to protect students from unintentional gun accidents or deaths. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive presentation of laws regulating firearm use and possession. Each lesson in the guidelines and curriculum is complete with background information, lesson guidelines and plans, suggested scripts for teachers, and student materials. Lessons are aligned with specific Virginia Standards of Learning for each grade. The curriculum is designed as single units of instruction for each grade. In each lesson, the message of what a child should do if he or she finds a gun is reinforced: "Leave it Alone; Leave the Area; and Let an Adult Know."

The document and an accompanying PowerPoint presentation adaptable for classroom use are posted on the [Gun Safety](#) page of the VDOE Web site.

Questions about the guidelines and curriculum can be directed to: Cynthia A. Cave, director of the Office of Student Services, 804-225-2818, or cynthia.cave@doe.virginia.gov.

