

This is a coordinated information update from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

September 2026

INSTRUCTIONS TO SCHOOLS

1. **FAIR NOTICE REQUIREMENT:** Please note that, related to the new Firearm Violence Prevention Act, schools are to post the following sections (see descriptions below) on their school websites as applicable.

Fair Notice to Parents/Guardians – Elementary Schools

Fair Notice for Parents/Guardians – Middle and Secondary Schools

2. **PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION:** In addition, where a school and/or district deems it necessary, this information should be shared directly with parents/guardians (*examples may include: a rural community where parents may regularly have firearms in vehicles; to the parents of a cadet troop; in schools where students have brought in lighters that replicate guns or were known to bring in imitation firearms*).

Background for Schools and Districts - Firearm Violence Prevention Act – NEW

Intended Audience: Safe School Coordinators, Principals and Vice-Principals, Parents/Guardians

The Ministry of Education and Child Care recognizes the importance of maintaining safe, welcoming and supportive learning environments for students, staff and families. As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen safety in schools, we are sharing information from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General about new provincial firearms laws affecting K-12 school property.

The following information explains how the new *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* applies to school property, outlines key considerations for schools and districts, and provides guidance on how narrow exemptions to the new requirements may apply to certain safe and otherwise lawful activities on school property.

What is the Firearm Violence Prevention Act (FVPA)?

Starting October 1, 2026, new laws and regulations under the *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* (FVPA) are coming into effect in British Columbia. The legislation is intended to address unsafe firearm use and firearm-related violence. The FVPA replaces the former provincial *Firearm Act*.

Firearms are regulated by both federal and provincial governments. The FVPA complements current federal laws by addressing public safety risks associated with firearms, low-velocity and imitation firearms that are not fully addressed under federal legislation. Common examples of low-velocity firearms include BB, pellet, gel, airsoft and paintball guns, and imitation firearms are items that could reasonably be mistaken for a real firearm, such as lighters designed to closely resemble firearms.

What is New?

While many schools already have internal policies banning or restricting firearms on school property, the FVPA further strengthens existing policies by providing law enforcement additional tools to address and enforce firearms-related public safety risks through a province-wide prohibition on firearms, low-velocity and imitation firearms at K-12 schools and other designated properties.

The goal of the provincial requirements is to keep schools safe by keeping firearms and objects that look like firearms out of schools.

Exemptions for Authorized Activities

The FVPA includes narrow exemptions that allow for safe and legitimate activities involving firearms, low-velocity firearms or imitation firearms to continue on K-12 school property when authorized in advance by the school. The decision to approve or deny activities that may be eligible under these exemptions rests with the school. Schools can also impose conditions to their approval, such as specific times and locations where the activity can occur, limitations on the items being used, minimum safety measures, and requiring organizers to supervise and remain available throughout the duration of the requested activity,

Some examples of activities that may be eligible for an exemption include:

- Cadet programs
- Biathlon demonstrations or events
- Cinematic, theatrical, film or artistic activities or performances
- Educational activities (e.g., firearms safety training)

Individuals who are safely transporting firearms, low-velocity firearms, or imitation firearms in a vehicle on school property may also be exempted from the general FVPA prohibition as long as applicable requirements in the regulations and other relevant firearms laws are followed (e.g., firearms remain unloaded and safely stored in a locked trunk or container).

Responsibilities for Schools

Anyone planning to conduct an exempted activity on school property must obtain written authorization from the school's relevant entity prior to the activity.

Schools are encouraged to use a general written documentation process to confirm when permission for an activity has been granted under an FVPA exemption, along with any conditions of the approval. For shooting competitions or artistic activities, such as

photography, film, or painting taking place on school property, advance written documentation must be shared with your police of jurisdiction to ensure they are informed of the planned activities.

School staff should also have this information communicated to them in advance of the activity to ensure their awareness. This process is similar to current practices used by schools to allow these activities under the former provincial *Firearm Act*.

Consequences

Anyone who illegally possesses a firearm, low-velocity firearm, or imitation firearm on school property without a valid exemption may have these items confiscated, forfeited and disposed of by law enforcement, and if convicted of an offence, may face fines and serious penalties under the FVPA.

For more information on the *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* and regulations, visit:

[Firearm Violence Prevention Act \(FVPA\) - Province of British Columbia](#)

A general notice for parents/guardians is included below, with separate versions for elementary and middle/secondary schools. Please link to existing school or district policy that bans firearms on school grounds. Notices can be posted on school websites.

Fair Notice to Parents/Guardians – Elementary Schools

Starting October 1, 2026, new laws and regulations under the *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* (FVPA) are coming into effect in B.C. The FVPA further strengthens existing school and district policies banning firearms on school property by providing law enforcement with additional tools to address and enforce firearms-related public safety risks. The FVPA does this by establishing a clear and consistent province-wide prohibition on firearms, low-velocity firearms (such as BB, pellet, gel, airsoft and paintball guns) and imitation firearms (such as lighters designed to closely resemble firearms) on all K-12 school properties.

Some schools regularly support and authorize a wide range of educational, community and special events on school property, including activities that occur outside regular school hours, on evenings, and on weekends. The legislation includes exemptions for certain safe and legitimate activities, including cadet programs. In addition, individuals who are safely transporting firearms, low-velocity firearms or imitation firearms in a vehicle are exempted as long as applicable requirements in the regulations and all other relevant firearms laws are followed (e.g., firearms remain unloaded and safely stored in a locked trunk or container).

For information on existing policies in the school or district that ban firearms, please refer to [schools/districts to add link].

For more information on the *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* and regulations, visit:

[Firearm Violence Prevention Act \(FVPA\) - Province of British Columbia](#)

Fair Notice for Parents/Guardians – Middle and Secondary Schools

Starting October 1, 2026, new laws and regulations under the *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* (FVPA) are coming into effect in B.C. The legislation is intended to address unsafe firearm use and firearm-related violence.

The FVPA complements and further strengthens existing legislation and school and district policies banning firearms on school property by providing law enforcement with additional tools to address and enforce firearm-related public safety risks. The FVPA does this by establishing a clear and consistent province-wide prohibition on firearms, low-velocity firearms (such as BB, pellet, gel, airsoft and paintball guns) and imitation firearms (such as lighters designed to closely resemble firearms) on all K-12 school properties. The goal of these new laws is to promote greater public safety by keeping firearms and objects that look like firearms out of schools.

Some schools regularly support and authorize a wide range of educational, community and special events on school property, including activities that occur outside regular school hours, on evenings, and on weekends. The legislation includes narrow exemptions for certain safe and legitimate activities using firearms, low-velocity or imitation firearms. Examples of activities that may be eligible for an exemption include:

- Cadet programs
- Biathlon demonstrations or events
- Cinematic, theatrical, film, or artistic activities or performances
- Educational activities (e.g., firearms safety training)

In addition, individuals who are safely transporting firearms, low-velocity firearms, or imitation firearms in a vehicle are exempted as long as applicable requirements in the regulations and all other relevant firearms laws are followed (e.g., firearms remain unloaded and safely stored in a locked trunk or container).

Anyone who illegally possesses a firearm, low-velocity firearm, or imitation firearm on school property without a valid exemption may have these items confiscated, forfeited and disposed of by law enforcement, and if convicted of an offence, may face fines and serious penalties under the FVPA.

For information on existing policies in the school or district that ban firearms, please refer to [schools/districts to add link].

For more information on the *Firearm Violence Prevention Act* and regulations, visit:

[Firearm Violence Prevention Act \(FVPA\) - Province of British Columbia](#)