

Firearms

Otamatea High School may allow student involvement with firearms for educational purposes and may allow firearms to be brought onto the school premises for other valid and lawful reasons. Otamatea High School's Firearms Policy sets out the practices in place for firearms to ensure that the school minimises risks, complies with legislation, and provides a safe physical and emotional environment for its students.

The school's firearms policy is part of its wider Health, Safety, and Welfare Policy and works in conjunction with the Risk Management Policy. It operates under the legal framework of the Arms Act 1983, Arms Regulations 1992, and Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. It covers "what is acceptable in terms of firearms on and off school grounds, offsite activities involving students, at school events and in (or not in) the presence of students" (Ministry Guidelines for schools developing a firearms policy).

All school staff and students, members of the community, and anyone wishing to bring firearms onto school grounds or to involve students in firearms related activities should make themselves familiar with this policy, abide by this policy, and consult with the school as required. Authorities such as the New Zealand Police or New Zealand Defence Force are not bound by this policy in situations of law enforcement or national security.

Permitted involvement with firearms and airguns

A firearm is "anything from which any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile can be discharged by force of explosive," and includes objects which could be made capable of doing this (Arms Act 1983, 2.1). An airgun is "any air rifle, air pistol or weapon that has a gas or compressed air firing mechanism." It "includes air rifles, air pistols, BB guns, soft air pellet guns and paintball guns. Some more powerful airguns are treated in the Arms Act 1983 as firearms" (Ministry Guidelines).

Otamatea High School allows student involvement with firearms for certain school-related events and/or activities. Firearms may be allowed on the school grounds and students may be allowed involvement with firearms off the school premises for Education Outside of the Classroom (EOTC) events such as clay target shooting; and controlled activities on school camps such as those supervised by Blue Light; Firearms safety courses, or any Defence Force or NZ Police visits.

Students may not store guns or ammunition at school.

Preparation and approval

Before approving any school-related event/activity involving firearms, the school considers health and wellbeing and conducts a risk management assessment (as part of our Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) planning). The plan outlines the supervision procedures which will be in place and will refer to the Ministry Guidelines on Developing a Firearms Policy 2018. It is submitted to the board, who must approve any event involving firearms, and is available to the parents/caregivers of students involved.

Any school events/activities involving firearms require parent/caregiver approval. When firearms are to be brought onto school premises or students are to travel off-site for an event/activity involving firearms, the school seeks informed consent from parents/caregivers. Where consent is not given, the student is not involved in the event and educational outcomes are delivered another way. If conditional consent is given, the school makes an individual risk assessment for the student and consults with the parents/caregivers.

If organising a sports event involving firearms, the school submits a safety plan to the New Zealand Secondary School Sports Council (NZSSSC) for endorsement.

To ensure student safety, the school preps students in the expected behaviour and rules for any upcoming event/activity involving firearms. The school also arranges firearm safety training for students involved in extracurricular shooting activities (such as small bore and clay bird/target shooting).

Supervision, licences, and rules of use

Anyone in possession of a firearm must have a firearms licence or be supervised by a person with a firearms licence. Supervisors must be watchful, within reach, and able to take control of the firearm. Although students may have firearms licences, they are not permitted to supervise other students. Students without a firearms licence are only permitted to handle firearms at school-related activities or events with board and parental consent.

Anyone bringing a firearm onto school premises must report to the principal on arrival. Firearms must be brought to the school unloaded with the bolt removed (if able) and the bearer must show their firearms licence to the principal (or an appointed member of the school staff), who will keep a copy on file. The details of the firearm and its user, and the arrival and departure of the firearm from the school grounds is entered into the school firearms log.

When students attend an off-site activity involving firearms, school staff sight and document the firearms licence of the supervisor of the event.

Anyone handling a firearm must comply with the New Zealand Police Website [Seven Firearms Safety Rules](#). Students and school visitors follow any additional rules that the school may put in place for the event/activity.

Transportation and storage of firearms

Firearms must always be transported in compliance with current legislation. Otamatea High School does not store firearms or ammunition on the school premises.

Incidents

Any incidents of adverse or dangerous behaviour, accident, injury, or failure to abide by the firearms policy are recorded in an incident report and supplied to the board of trustees.

In the event of any injury or accident, the school follows the [healthcare](#) procedures and [crisis management](#) policy if required.

Imitation guns

An imitation firearm is "anything that has the appearance of being a firearm capable of discharging any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile, whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile" (Arms Act 1983, 2.1). It is an offence to carry an imitation firearm without a lawful, proper, and sufficient purpose (Arms Act 1983 46). The Ministry guidelines indicate that imitation firearms include toy guns.

Otamatea High School does not allow imitation guns at school. Exceptions may be made in certain circumstances, with school permission, e.g. for a school play or a dress-up day. School staff supervise the use of imitation guns, and respond to any inappropriate use. See [Surrender and Retention](#).