



Hunt SAFE for Schools

“How do I start?”

First off, the idea of Hunt SAFE for Schools (HS4S) varies somewhat from traditional hunter safety courses that are held during an evening or weekend at a local GFP office, community center, or even school. HS4S is intended to be integrated into the existing class structure & day at a school. For example, using the course as an instructional unit in PE similar to a unit on basketball, soccer, etc. There are a number of different classes where this could fit, depending on the school and teacher(s).

The best place to start the conversation about incorporating HS4S into existing curriculum is with the school administrators (i.e. superintendents and principals). The teacher that will be hosting the course should be part of the conversation as well. Every district is different, but most teachers have control over *how* they teach their classes, within SD educational content standards. And few appreciate being told how they will teach their classes, so it's best to have everyone at the table.

Some FAQs

What's our liability?

When the New Underwood School District decided to offer this course to the junior high students, the superintendent contacted the school attorney (Rodney Freeman; Churchill, Manolis, Freeman, Kludt & Burns, LLP in Huron, SD). The attorney's opinion was that since no functional firearms, live ammunition, or actual shooting were used, there is no additional liability concerns.

How much time is needed? What if we're on a four-day school week?

There is a lot of flexibility in how the course is offered to best fit into existing school schedules. The baseline requirement is a minimum of 10 contact hours. The students are required to take a final exam in order to receive their Hunt SAFE certification card. This score can be used as their grade for this unit.

Instructors can be extremely creative in adapting the course to make it fit in your school. Hands-on activities and lessons are the best, but the course can also be taught in a standard classroom with non-gun props (e.g. yard sticks). *No functional guns are used in the course.*

Schools on a four-day school week can still use the course. They could extend the course into a third week in order to have 10 contact days. Additional assignments (homework) can be given to the students to work on in their own time to add learning time.

Who will teach it?

The course can be taught by GFP staff, certified Hunt SAFE instructors, and/or certified teachers, or any combination thereof! The ultimate goal of GFP is to provide training to teachers that can



take the lead in offering the course for their students, with assistance from local GFP staff and other volunteer instructors.

Will real guns be brought into school?

No functional firearms or live ammunition will be brought into the school.

What's the educational value?

The emphasis of the course is on **firearm safety and responsibility**. The course covers a number of content standards in Physical Education, science, CTE, environmental science, etc. It also encourages a safe, healthy lifelong activity.

Some PE content standards (middle and high school) that can be met through this course include:

- S1. M22 – Outdoor Education
- S2.M13 – Recreation/Outdoor Education
- S4.M1 – Personal Responsibility
- S1.H1 – Lifetime Activities
- S4.H5 - Safety

What grade(s) would this be appropriate for?

The certification course is designed for students age 11 and up (generally 6th grade). SD law states that individuals must be at least 12 years old to receive their Hunt SAFE certification card.

A stand-alone firearm safety presentation would be appropriate for younger grades.

Is there a cost?

No. This course is offered free of charge.

What equipment is needed?

This can vary somewhat, based on the format that will be used for the course. Basic needs include classroom space, a laptop and/or DVD player, a white board, and a projector.

For certain parts of the course, it's good to have access to a larger open space such as a gym, ballfield, or commons area. There are several hands-on scenarios that help the students to practice what they learn. Ideally, the instructor(s) would be able to use the non-functional demonstration firearms (AKA dummy guns or Nerf guns) for these lessons. Though other options have been used in other schools (e.g. yard sticks). However, instructors believe that the more realistic teaching tools are more effective in helping the students to learn proper firearm handling and safety.

What if our School Resource Officer has issues or concerns?

In this day and age, the topic of firearms can be a very controversial one, especially in schools. However, the emphasis of this course is to promote **responsible, safe firearm handling**. School Resource Officers and any other administrators are more than welcome to sit in and participate in this course. Instructors are more than happy to meet with them prior to the course to discuss any concerns, school policies, best practices, etc.



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

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Do the students have to become hunters?

As stated before, the emphasis of this course is on safe, responsible firearm handling. This is a valuable life skill regardless of whether someone chooses to hunt or shoot recreationally. GFP certainly encourages everyone to make the most of the wonderful natural resources that SD has to offer. We also realize that hunting will not become everyone's favorite activity. While hunting is used as the foundation for the course, the skills and information gained are valuable for the hunter and non-hunter alike.

GFP staff are more than happy to visit with you in more depth about the possibility of offering this course in your school. Contact info is below

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