



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 7, 2020

Louisiana Family Sues School District After Son Suspended for BB Gun in Bedroom During Virtual Class

The family of a Louisiana fourth-grader who was suspended from school after a teacher saw a BB gun in his room during an online lesson filed a lawsuit against the school district Friday.

Ka'Mauri Harrison, 9, was taking a test at a desk in his bedroom during a virtual class on September 11 when his younger brother entered the room and tripped over a BB gun that was next to the desk. According to the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, "Ka'Mauri moved the gun from one side of his chair to the other, leaning it up against the table — the barrel within range of his computer camera."



Photo: wildpixel / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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"His teacher saw him move the BB gun and tried unsuccessfully to get his attention, but he had muted his computer," the paper continued. "Moments later, he was disconnected from the lesson. When his mother called the school, she was told that the BB gun had been reported to the principal."

Ka'Mauri was suspended for six days and recommended for expulsion. The school system claimed Ka'Mauri had violated "its policy forbidding weapons at school or school functions," wrote the *Times-Picayune*. The official school behavior report described the incident as "possesses weapons prohibited under federal law," reported [WDSU](#).

During a September 22 hearing, a hearing officer concluded that Ka'Mauri was "guilty of displaying a facsimile weapon while receiving virtual instruction" and upheld the suspension, though the officer denied the expulsion request.

In other words, for having a non-lethal gun in sight, even though it threatened no other students, Ka'Mauri was punished and now has a weapons violation on his permanent record.

"This is a terrible overreaction," attorney Chelsea Cusimano, who represents the Harrison family, told WDSU. "This is not a child bringing a weapon to school. This was a toy that was in his bedroom. This would be the same as if you had two siblings in a room and one's ADHD medication was in the background and that child's getting charged with a drug charge."

The school system appears not to have an official policy regarding weapons in virtual school — in fact, it may not have policies for virtual classes at all — leaving such matters up to the discretion of teachers and administrators, some of whom would seem to be anti-gun zealots.

After Ka'Mauri's suspension became national news, a variety of individuals and organizations rallied to his cause, among them Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the National Rifle Association (NRA).



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“This case arises from egregious government overreach, complete lack of common sense to prevail and correct the glaring failures of local government officials to comply with the law,” reads the lawsuit. “The result is a terrifying intrusion into a family’s home and a bureaucratic nightmare that unites the Attorney General, ACLU, and the NRA in agreement that the parents and child’s statutory and constitutional rights have been violated.”

According to the *Times-Picayune*, “The suit accuses the school system of a number of missteps, including failing to provide the family with a copy of policies for online school before the academic year started and failing to give Ka’Mauri due process rights under the law for students facing serious discipline.”

“The school board, from the moment this incident occurred, mishandled it every step of the way. And it’s riddled throughout the paperwork; charging this child with a weapons violation,” Cusimano told [WDSU](#).

The suit, filed in state court, seeks “damages and an order that the School Board conduct a hearing about the decisions of the administrator who disciplined Ka’Mauri and let the boy make up any work he missed during his six-day suspension,” noted the *Times-Picayune*.

While the Harrisons are right to seek justice for their son, they should perhaps feel fortunate that he was only suspended over the BB gun. A Maryland school actually [dispatched police to search a family’s home](#) when their fifth-grade son’s BB gun was spotted during a virtual lesson.

Regardless of the outcome of Ka’Mauri’s case, the attention it has brought to virtual-school policies may end up benefiting all Louisiana students who attend online classes. The Harrisons, penned WDSU, “are hoping to introduce legislation during the [state legislature’s] special session to protect virtual students[’] rights.”



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