



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 4, 2012

## Pizza Pistol Prompts Punishment for Public-school Pupil

Fortunately, the boy complied rather than mowing down his classmates in a hail of anchovies, and the danger was averted. And for so recklessly endangering the lives of his fellow students, he was punished with six days of eating lunch at the “silent table” and a lecture on pizza — er, gun — safety.

The incident is the latest — and perhaps the most ludicrous, though the competition is fierce — example of public schools’ zero-tolerance policies with regard to firearms. Students have previously been disciplined for such grave infractions as [doodling a picture of a gun](#) and [possessing a pen with the logo of a gun manufacturer](#). Now, it seems, the time-honored tradition of playing with one’s food can land a kid in the principal’s office if he imagines that food is a deadly weapon.



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Nicholas’ mother, LeAnn, told Nashville’s [WKRN-TV](#) that the brouhaha began when “the kid across the table from him said [his partially eaten pizza slice] looked like a gun” and her son “picked it up and started shooting it in the air,” as 10-year-old boys are wont to do when presented with anything they can pretend is a firearm. Nicholas must have known this was a violation of the school’s zero-tolerance policy because the other students surely did. They used this knowledge to get him in trouble, tattling to a teacher that “he was making some threatening hand gestures, that he was shooting other kids at the table,” as Evans described their snitching. Then, when the teacher asked him about his pizza pistol, Nicholas “didn’t tell him the truth about it,” Evans added, “so he got silent lunch for six days.” In addition, he was forced to “spen[d] time with the school resource officer learning about gun safety,” WKRN reports.

LeAnn Taylor said she found out about the incident when she got a note from the school telling her that her son had threatened other students. Informed of his punishment, she declared it “absolutely ridiculous.”

To the little Caesars in charge of public schools, however, brandishing a pizza gun is serious business indeed. “I realize some might say we are going overboard,” Evans told WKRN, “but the principal is just trying to use an abundance of caution and send the message that we don’t play about guns and it’s not something we joke around about.”

Indeed, the school rulers are so dead set against any reference to guns as anything but the root of all evil that, says WKRN, “the school system has made it clear that if [Nicholas] eats his pizza into the shape of a gun again and there is a similar occurrence, he will be suspended.” Thus is an extremely minor infraction — playing with one’s food and then fibbing about it when caught — transmogrified into



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an offense worthy of banishment from school grounds.

Of course, a suspension could turn out to be a blessing in disguise, getting Nicholas out of government school and into private or home school, where he would probably get a better education and would surely be surrounded by adults who can tell the difference between the imaginings of a 10-year-old with a piece of pizza and those of a psychopath with an AK-47.



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