



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 27, 2020

## School Drops Charges Against Fourth-grader Whose BB Gun Was Seen in Virtual Class

A Louisiana school district has dropped criminal charges against a fourth-grader whose BB gun was visible during an online lesson, though it took intervention from the state attorney general's office to get the school board to act.

According to [WDSU](#):

The East Baton Rouge Parish School System reported 11-year-old Rondell Coleman to the Sheriff's Department Sept. 18 when a gun was seen in his bedroom during a virtual class. The incident report said Rondell "was brandishing a gun on camera."

According to the report, the deputy went to the child's home, was allowed inside and brought a BB gun back to the school. "It (the BB gun) was confiscated and Rondell was charged," the report says.



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Evette Coleman, Rondell's grandmother, said both Rondell and his mother were read their *Miranda* rights and interrogated.

"Rondell was recommended for expulsion and immediately moved to an alternative school ... a last resort school for students with significant discipline problems and repeat violations," reported WDSU.

Rondell's was hardly the first such incident. According to the New Orleans [Times-Picayune](#), "At least four students in the [Jefferson Parish] public school district, the state's largest, have been recommended for expulsion and eventually were suspended after teachers or other students saw them with various weapons in their homes during virtual lessons."

On September 21, a ninth-grader was seen "flipping and twirling" two butterfly knives during a virtual lesson. On October 12, a seventh-grader was caught on camera showing his classmates a sword and a drawing he had made of it. Both students were recommended for expulsion but had their punishments reduced to a six-day suspension.

Sixth-grader Tomie Brown was [recommended for expulsion](#) after he showed a BB gun to some of his friends during an online class on September 9. The teacher didn't see it but heard some of the other students talking about it, and when she asked Tomie about it, he told the truth.

Tomie "realized he had made a mistake," the teacher wrote in her account of the incident. "In my opinion, he was not making a threat or threatening anyone. He just wanted to show the BB gun off to



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his peers.”

Nevertheless, Tomie and his father were summoned to the principal’s office, where they were told the principal was recommending Tomie, an otherwise exemplary student by his father’s account, for expulsion “for violating the school system’s rules that ban weapons on school property or at school-related functions,” wrote the *Times-Picayune*. The punishment was later “reduced to a three-day suspension and school-year-long probation that requires Tomie Brown to maintain good grades and behavior and submit to a social work assessment,” said the paper.

The most famous such case is that of [Ka’Mauri Harrison](#), a fourth-grader who was suspended for six days and recommended for expulsion after a BB gun next to his desk became visible during a September 11 online lesson. Ka’Mauri’s case attracted nationwide attention, including that of Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, whose office is still trying to get the school district to clear the boy’s record.

Having heard about Ka’Mauri’s situation, Evette Coleman contacted his attorney, Chelsea Cusimano. Cusimano, who is also handling Tomie Brown’s case, took the Rondell Coleman case to Landry’s office. They, in turn, contacted the East Baton Rouge school board, who agreed to drop the charges against the boy and wipe the violations from his record, although they kept him at the alternative school for another two weeks.

The Harrison family, meanwhile, is suing the Jefferson Parish school board, and the attention their case received prodded the state legislature to speedily and unanimously pass the Ka’Mauri Harrison Act, “which writes protections for virtual students into state law and requires school systems to create virtual school policies by Dec. 31,” noted WDSU.

The Jefferson Parish school board, which has yet to reverse of any its ridiculous BB-gun suspensions despite pleas from Landry’s office, actually argued against the bill on the grounds that “it would hamper school systems’ abilities to provide a safe learning environment for children,” penned the *Times-Picayune*.

Nevertheless, the bill is currently awaiting Governor John Bel Edwards’ signature, which can’t come soon enough for Ka’Mauri, Tomie, and others who have been unjustly punished by overreaching school administrators.



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