

Moving forward with preventing Knife Crime

Why Prevention is best?

Reviews of prevention programs/workshops show that they have been associated with positive outcomes in relation to alcohol, tobacco, cannabis & violence. Studies also show improvements in Mental Health & Social Skills, and reductions in anti-social behaviors and negative outcomes and to increase the chances of having healthier relationships.

There is further evidence demonstrating the link between social and emotional education programs and academic attainment, showing that this learning improves academic performance.

Efforts to build resilience have also been shown to have a positive impact both on risk-taking behaviors and on academic attainment.

We know from many reports that prevention is the key to helping reduce many issues that we face, such as: violence, anti-social behaviour, mental health/wellbeing concerns to name a few. One off workshops, help raise awareness on these topics and plant seeds of thought, however a consistent message is what changes mindsets. It is important that these topics are continuously discussed and covered to build on learning. This is why we have produced these worksheets to help give you ideas to carry the conversation on.

General Facts and Information.

Please find below some general information related to knife crime to use in activities and discussions. There are some useful websites at the end of this document to help you gather more information, with some of those websites also providing detailed lesson plans and activities on this topic.

Knife Crime

Knife crime is crime involving a knife. It's a crime to threaten someone with a knife or carry a knife as a weapon in a robbery or burglary. Police can search you if they think you're carrying a knife. Some knives are offensive weapons and are banned in public places.

#LivesNotKnives



What counts as knife crime?

Knife crime includes:

- carrying a knife or trying to buy one if you're under 18
- threatening someone with a knife
- carrying a knife that's banned
- a murder where the victim was stabbed with a knife
- a robbery or burglary where a thief carried a knife as a weapon

Offensive weapons

An offensive weapon is:

- an article designed to cause injury to another person
- an article carried with the intention of causing injury to another person

Penalties for knife crime

The law on knives says:

- it is illegal for anyone, including a shop, to sell a knife of any kind (including cutlery and kitchen knives) to anyone under the age of 18
- if you're under 18, it's illegal to buy most types of knives
- anyone over 10 can be charged and taken to court if they're caught with an illegal knife – even if it's the first time they've been stopped by the police
- if you're caught carrying a knife, you could receive a community sentence, a fine or imprisoned
- you could be searched at any time if a police officer thinks you may be carrying a knife

- even if you're carrying a knife that you're legally allowed to (like a penknife with a blade that's shorter than three inches), it becomes illegal if you use it as a weapon to threaten or harm anyone

The maximum sentence for carrying a knife illegally is four years in prison and an unlimited fine. If you injure someone or use a knife to commit a crime, the penalties could increase.

Carrying a knife

It's an offence to carry a knife or an offensive weapon in a public place without a good reason.

You could be prosecuted for carrying an article that could injure someone. If convicted, you could be imprisoned and fined.

Banned knives and offensive weapons

There is a complete ban on the sale of offensive weapons and certain knives, including:

- flick knives - where the blade is hidden inside the handle and shoots out when a button is pressed - these are also called switchblades or automatic knives
- butterfly knives - where the blade is hidden inside a handle that splits in two around it, like wings or the handles swing around the blade to open or close it
- disguised knives - where the blade is hidden inside something, like a belt buckle or fake mobile phone
- push daggers
- gravity knives
- 'airport' or stealth knives
- sword-sticks
- samurai swords
- knuckle-dusters
- hand-claws
- foot-claws
- blowpipes or guns
- kubotan (cylindrical container holding spikes)
- shuriken (also known as death stars or throwing stars)
- telescopic truncheons (automatically extending)
- kusari-gama (sickle attached to a rope, cord or wire)
- kyoketsu shoge (hook-knife attached to a rope, cord or wire)

- kusari (weight attached to a rope, cord or wire)
- straight, side handled or friction-lock truncheons

Stop and search

Police officers have the right to stop and search any person or vehicle if they suspect an offence. This includes illegally carrying a knife or offensive weapon.

Parents & Professionals.

We can sometimes find it hard to start conversations around difficult topics, please find below some advice and guidance for this.

Having the conversation and believing you can make a difference.

•**Getting started** – Find a quiet and private space, if not at home, you can go for a drive or a walk. Avoid when children are hungry or tired, reassure them they can be honest with no judgements and they have your support no matter what.

•**Be a good listener** – Remember for that child, this could be a difficult subject, be patient, do not react straight away to what they tell you, encourage them to share their fears and worries, try sharing yours too, tell them how much you worry about their safety and their future.

•**Be positive** – Let them know that they always have a choice, even if it seems that they don't. Make them aware that the vast amount of young people doesn't carry knives, it's becoming more and more unsuitable to do so.

•**Use facts and not opinions** – They will most likely think that you don't know what you are talking about, a little preparation will go a long way.

•**False bravery** – Raise the point, that walking away from confrontation or a fight is the braver thing to do, because people won't remember the person that walked away ten years later, but they won't forget the person who 'stood their ground' and the consequences of that, that will last a life time.

•**Who's affected** – Encourage them to consider who will be affected if they get involved in knife crime. How do they think their family will feel if they get arrested or hurt? How they could put their family at risk, if people come looking for them, such as at their home.

•**Be realistic** – Your child may feel that you have no idea how they feel! If you can draw upon any experiences or find news stories that you can refer to, that will show or point out your thoughts, concerns or feelings, you may be able to gain their interest.

•**Alternatives** – Seek out fun activities and positive engagements for young people.

•**Different approach** – Is there someone else that your young person trusts or respects to have a conversation?

•**Help and Support** – Try not to overreact and feel you have to deal with on your own, help is available.

Further awareness of Knife Crime

Kids need consistency -- they need to know what is expected. Your consistent response will make the difference.

Kid behaviors can be changed, but that change takes consistent educational effort and a bit of time. In fact, learning any new habit (and stopping the old) usually takes a minimum of 21 days.

If you break down the amount of time a young person needs consistency on a particular topic, PSHE would need to run lessons such as Knife crime, roughly, for three months and we would advise revisiting this topic or incorporating it, into further topics for reinforced learning.

Suggested approach;

1. There are key words within Knife Crime, we would suggest planning your work around these; 1. **Protection**, 2. **Social exclusion**, 3. **Justification**, these key words will give you an opportunity to channel into how they feel about themselves and the world around them, involving Knife Crime.
2. **Protection** – How do we keep ourselves safe? Firstly, give the young people an opportunity to show you how safe they feel. Activity – Have a map of your/their location, all estates surrounding your school, or get them to design their own but supply an example. Get them to mark the places that they feel safe/unsafe, based on this visual, will open discussions around why its unsafe, who is unsafe and how do we keep ourselves safe? Keep this work, individual work, give the young person privacy to reveal their fears with no judgements from other class members, this will also give the school an insight into their pupil's insecurities and raise any safeguarding concerns. Then ask the questions as a whole group.

- 3. Social exclusion** – Will give you an opportunity to explore how your young people feel about themselves. Start with helping them to understand the full impact of social exclusion and then support them to identify where this may apply to themselves. What are the types of social exclusion? What causes social exclusion? How do we avoid exclusion? Overall point of this key word is to work through challenges and how we can be better than where society places us, to recognize the possibilities and to not fall into a predictable group, such as gangs and knife crime because of disadvantages and self-worth. You can do a collage comparison of what the world looks like to them now (to reveal how hopeful they are of their future, see their barriers emotionally and physically) and how they would like the world to look for them. This piece of work can be a reminder, if done well and placed on a wall, we suggest small groups of collages and then place them all together as one whole piece.
- 4. Justification** – Our young people are massively influenced by the world around them. Firstly, start with exploring learnt behavior and where they believe they are gaining their morals and values from. Then move onto set scenarios with violent outcomes, ask them to place themselves into the criminal's shoes and ask them, what actions they would have taken, with no judgements towards their answers (their answers will be dependent on their reputation, learnt behavior and their insecurities) Their answers will give you the opportunity to explore their thinking, question where their thoughts/choices have come from. Explore the emotion behind their answers, have a discussion around emotional response and being led by offence, is everything personal? No, everyone has a story! The overall point behind this key word, is to support our young people towards understanding who they are as individuals and who they would like to be.

Topics to address throughout the Key words.

- What may a young person be lacking? Why may they be a target? Create a mood board, focusing on; Power & Control, Fear & Vulnerability, Pressure & Manipulation and Desperation & Despair. You can use this activity to look at the victim and the perpetrator.
- What do we see when we think of these feelings? Support the young people connect emotions with actions, such as Power & Control – Ego, Fear & Vulnerability – Hiding, Pressure & Manipulation – Copycat (doing what your told) and Desperation & Despair – Poverty.
- Collages (pictures) can help a young person understand the message you're sending across (not everyone has a visual learning approach) for an older group such as year 10 or 11, can collectively look at pictures of knife wounds and the impact of knife wounds on the body, for

example, understanding the severity such as artery wounds and bleeding to death in minutes. This can be seen as a hard learning point (judgement call)

- Leading on from the workshop and Maddie's story, the groups who participated can create a monkey timeline of Maddie's story, reinforce learning of how easily and unintentionally her life led to knife crime. Draw Maddie at the beginning holding a hand, then holding a spliff, then holding drugs, then holding a package, then holding a knife! Again, a visual of how quickly someone's life can change.

- No smoke without fire – Why is there conflict, that creates knife crime? What type of conflicts?

- Social Media – You can apply this to social exclusion, what role does social media play in the hype or unintentional encouragement around knife crime?

Further advice and support

1. Crimestoppers - <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk>
2. Childline – <https://www.childline.org.uk>
3. The Safety Box – <https://www.thesafetybox.org>
4. The Ben Kinsella Trust – <https://www.benkinsella.org.uk>
5. Anna Freud – <https://www.annafreud.org>
6. Parentline – <https://familylives.org.uk>

For more in depth workshops on these topics please contact Resilience Voyage Ltd on 07710692285/07817470091 or visit our website at www.resiliencevoyage.co.uk