



Dear Parents/Carers

### **Addressing concerns regarding Knife Crime**

The police, local authority and schools in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead are committed to working together to protect our young people from the risks of knife crime.

To do this, we use educational inputs from a range of local agencies to ensure that students are well-informed about the consequences and dangers of carrying weapons, and also work with schools to identify any student that may be at risk of doing so. Thames Valley Police is also committed to Operation Sceptre; a national ongoing police operation which actively targets knife crime and includes steps such as focussing on any identified knife crime hotspots, conducting weapon sweeps, speaking with affected communities and testing that retailers don't sell knives to young people.

It's important that the police, schools and families all work together to protect our young people. Parents and carers have a vital role in re-enforcing the knife crime message to their children. The consequences of being found with a knife can be serious and long lasting, affecting education, future employment and travel opportunities. Most crucially of course, the biggest concern is the risk of serious harm or even someone losing their life.

It's also important that we reflect the local situation in the work that we do with our young people and not just the UK wide picture, which has often led to the tragic news headlines many of us will have seen, certainly across the last year. A very small minority of young people in this area, may carry or be tempted to carry weapons, often because they mistakenly feel it will provide them with protection, or they believe it will increase the respect they are given by their friends. The sad reality is that this actually makes them more likely to become victims of serious violence as a consequence.

Parents should also be aware that this issue is not just centred on boys, as girls may sometimes carry or store weapons, either for their own protection or perhaps for boyfriends or other male friends because they believe they are less likely to be stopped by the police. Their reasons are often misguided loyalty or love, but it is still a crime if they are caught carrying a knife and of course presents a huge risk to the safety of them and others.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED

Speak to your child calmly and explain the risks and consequences of knives and weapons. Further advice on talking to your child is available at:

[www.noknivesbetterlives.com/parents/having-the-conversation](http://www.noknivesbetterlives.com/parents/having-the-conversation)

<https://www.knifefree.co.uk/worried-young-person/>

You may wish to contact a member of your school Pastoral Team if you have a concern or feel your child is at risk and staff will talk through your concerns and look to plan a way forward together.

If you or your child are aware that other young people in school or the community are carrying knives or weapons, you should contact the police directly via 101. Alternatively you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

If a crime is taking place or a life is in danger, call 999 immediately.

## SCHOOL POLICY FOR WEAPONS POSSESSION

It is essential that we work together to reduce the chances of any child bringing a weapon to school. Schools across the RBWM area, all have strict policies that ban any weapons and all will take action in relation to any student found to be carrying a knife, both on and off the school premises. This may include the use of permanent exclusion as a sanction. The police will also be informed.

## THE POLICE RESPONSE TO WEAPONS POSSESSION

Where young people are involved in crime, the police will try to avoid criminalising them; however, carrying a knife or other **weapon is very serious and can likely result in a charge and court appearance or a caution delivered by the Youth Offending Service.**

If you would like to discuss this issue in more detail, please contact your child's school.

Yours faithfully,



Superintendent Colin Hudson  
Local Police Area Commander for Windsor & Maidenhead