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# Teaching to Prevent Weapons, Gangs and Violence:

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Guidance for School Leaders, PSHE  
Leaders and Teachers

A Collaboration between SIL, Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership  
and Liverpool Citysafe. *Produced by Julie McCann of SIL*



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## Introduction

This document is the result of a collaboration between [SIL](#), [Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership \(MVRP\)](#) and [Liverpool Community Safety Partnership, Citysafe](#).

It is designed to accompany the CPD programme and support schools in understanding, contextualising and responding to issues relating to weapons, gangs and serious youth violence.

Grounded in national data, current research and statutory guidance, the CPD and supporting materials adopt a preventative, trauma-informed approach that avoids sensationalism or fear-based messaging.

They aim to dispel common myths, promote accurate social norms, and strengthen the protective role of education, particularly PSHE - by equipping staff with the knowledge, language and strategies needed to support children and young people's safety, wellbeing and decision-making within their local context.

## Accompanying CPD for Schools

SIL provides a range of CPD sessions both centrally and delivered in your school setting on the subject of Weapons and Gangs Prevention Through the PSHE Curriculum.

Contact [julie.mccann@sil-ltd.co.uk](mailto:julie.mccann@sil-ltd.co.uk) to arrange this.

The following pre-recorded training webinars are also available:

### Webinar 1

Overview

### Webinar 2

Data  
v  
Perceptions

### Webinar 3

Primary School  
Lessons and  
Activities

### Webinar 4

Secondary School  
Lessons and  
Activities

### Webinar 5

Safe and Effective  
Teaching  
Strategies

## Statutory Responsibilities: RSHE, KSIE and the Serious Violence Duty

Statutory RSHE guidance requires schools to teach age-appropriate content on violence, weapons, exploitation, the law and personal safety, alongside ensuring pupils understand where and how to seek help from trusted adults.

Crucially, schools are expected to avoid using fear as an educational tool and to reinforce accurate social norms, including the fact that weapon carrying is uncommon.

In addition, the Serious Violence Duty places a responsibility on public bodies including schools to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce serious violence through early identification, information sharing and prevention.

By embedding preventative education within PSHE and adopting a whole school approach, schools play a key role in reducing risk, strengthening protective factors and safeguarding children and young people.

## Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance (published July 2025 for implementation by September 2026)

### [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)

- **Relationships and Sex Education End of Secondary Expectations: Online Safety and Awareness**  
8. That the internet contains inappropriate and upsetting content, some of which is illegal, including ... violence or use of weapons. Pupils should be taught where to go for advice and support about something they have seen online. Pupils should understand that online content can present a distorted picture of the world and normalise or glamorise behaviours which are unhealthy and wrong. P.15
- **Health Education End of Primary Expectations: Wellbeing Online**  
6. The risks of illegal behaviours online, including drug and knife supply or the sale or purchasing of illicit drugs online. P.28
- **Health Education End of Secondary Expectations: Personal Safety**  
4. Understanding which trusted adults they can talk to if pupils are worried about violence and/or knife crime.  
  
5. The law as it relates to knives and violence. Content and examples should relate to the local context and avoid using fear as an educational tool. Children should be taught that carrying weapons is uncommon and should not be scared into the perception that many young people are carrying knives (which can lead to the misconception that they need to carry a knife too). P.31

- **Teaching about the law**  
63. ... Pupils should understand the law about ...
  - carrying knives and weapons
  - extremism/radicalisation
  - grooming or exploiting children into criminal activity, which can include gang involvement and county lines drug running ... the age of criminal responsibility P.35

## Keeping Children Safe in Education

- **Early help**  
18. Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who ...
  - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
  - is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
  - has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
  - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
  - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited P.10

- **Child criminal exploitation (CCE)**  
35. Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

36. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. P. 15

- **Serious violence**  
46. All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation. P. 17

- **County lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing. P.151-2

If teachers or parents are concerned about potential child exploitation, they can refer to the Pan Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol: [PAN Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol](#).

This protocol details key vulnerability factors, signs of exploitation and key definitions for different types of exploitation, as well as an overview of the multi-agency processes in place.

# Serious Violence Duty Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence: Statutory Guidance for Responsible Authorities (December 2022)

## Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance

291. Engagement in education is a strong protective factor against children and young people's risk of involvement in serious violence. Through engaging in good quality education, children and young people feel a sense of belonging, achievement and are equipped with skills and resilience they need to be safe and to succeed in life. Education providers have a vital role in preventing and reducing serious violence by facilitating early intervention, prevention and safeguarding children and young people in their care as a relevant agency within the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements P94-95

### **Accountability**

#### State-funded school inspection toolkit version 1.1

Schools are externally evaluated by OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education), with the most recent update to the inspection framework taking effect from November 2025.

A new section within the Safeguarding evaluation of the inspection toolkit focuses specifically on child-on-child violence, emphasising the need for robust procedures, staff awareness, and a culture of vigilance.

Leaders must ensure that staff can recognise early signs that a pupil may be at risk of involvement in violence, and whether staff understand that timely, evidence-based intervention can prevent escalation.

In gathering evidence about child-on-child violence, inspectors evaluate the extent to which leaders:

- fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence, which includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse (including physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm, with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils' own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse)
- ensure that staff are aware of the signs that pupils may be at risk of becoming involved in violence and understand that early, evidence-based intervention can be key to preventing them from going on to commit violence
- take timely action to support and protect the victim, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other pupils who are involved or otherwise affected
- have appropriate risk assessments that are reviewed regularly and make sure that staff know and understand the scale and range of sexual violence and sexual harassment, and the circumstances under which these occur, including beyond the school and/or online
- ensure that staff respond quickly and effectively to all signs of child-on-child violence and all reports and concerns about it
- have clear, effective systems for reporting incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment, for sharing information and for consulting with multi-agency safeguarding partners. P.7

# Knife Related Facts – Teacher Knowledge

## General Risks

Young men are statistically the highest risk group for involvement in knife crime. Carrying a knife greatly increases the chance that it will be used in a conflict.

## UK Law on Knives

It is a criminal offence to have any item with a blade in a public place, including:

- scissors
- craft knives
- knives disguised as another object (e.g., comb knives, pen knives)

It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy any type of knife.

It is illegal to carry a knife for self-defence.

If police find somebody carrying a knife – even if they say it is for protection or they are holding it for someone else – they will be arrested and can be prosecuted.

Using a knife, even in self-defence, can lead to charges such as assault with intent.

A person can go to prison for carrying a knife even if it is not used.

Police have the power to stop and search anyone they believe is carrying a knife.

## Joint Enterprise

If someone is injured or killed with a knife and others are present, they can be prosecuted even if they never touched the weapon.

Under “joint enterprise”, an associate can receive the same charge and prison sentence as the person who used the knife.

## Imitation Weapons

It is illegal to carry an imitation firearm or realistic looking weapon in public without a lawful reason.

An imitation weapon can be treated by police as a real threat, leading to arrest, prosecution, or armed response involvement.

Possession of an imitation firearm in public can result in up to 12 months imprisonment.

## Health and Safety Facts

There is no safe place to stab someone – wounds to the legs, arms, or bottom can still hit major arteries.

A person can bleed to death in under five minutes if an artery is punctured.

## Long-term Consequences

A criminal record for knife possession or use can:

- prevent entry into college or university
- make employment harder, and completely close off a number of professions
- stop somebody being able to travel to certain countries (e.g., USA, Australia)

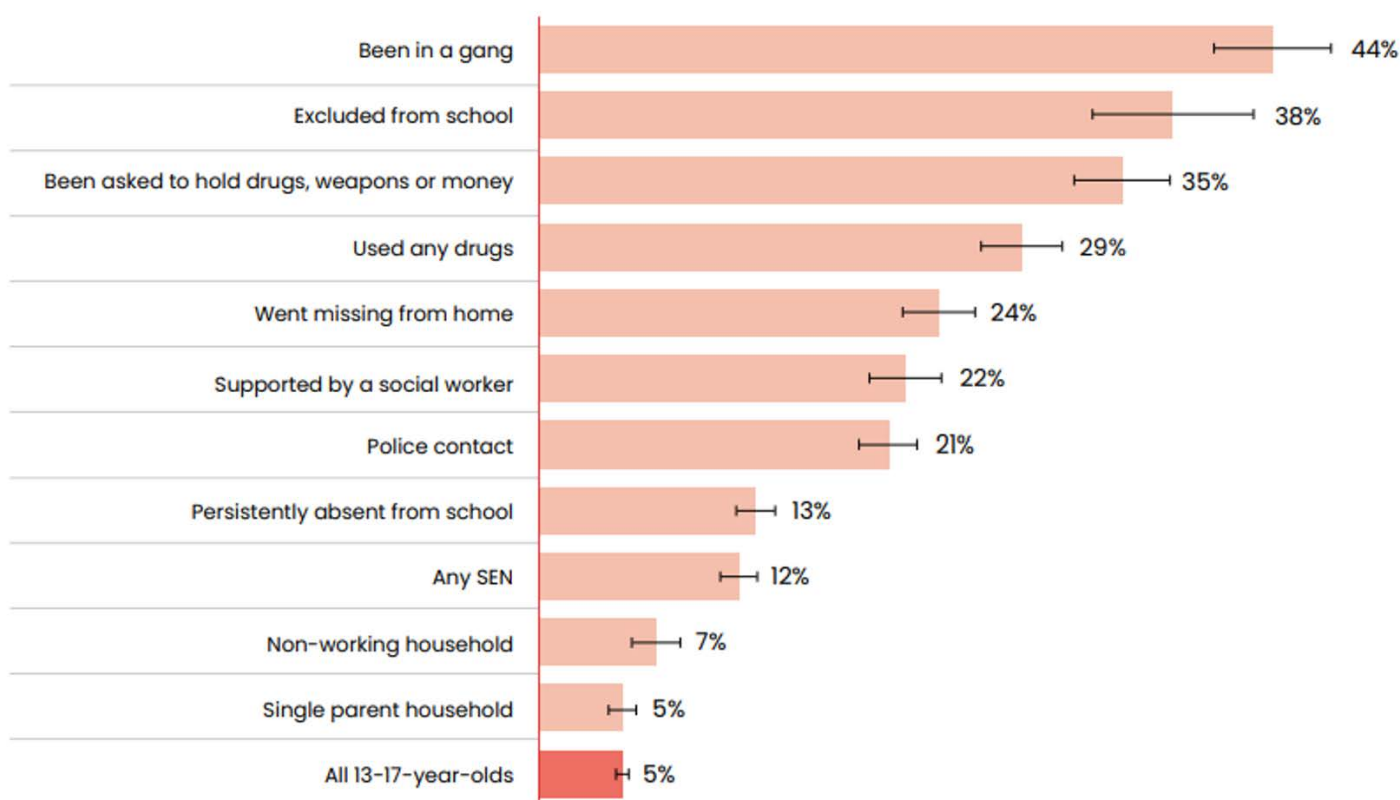
## Crime Data

Violence has generally fallen over the long term. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report that violence with and without injury has shown a consistent decrease, levels of violence are much lower now than in the 1990s and early 2000s and homicide is at its lowest level since the early 1980s. This data is taken from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) which is widely considered the most reliable indicator of long-term crime trends because it is not affected by changes in police recording practices.

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) reported that in 2025, 2% of young people aged 13–17 had carried a knife within the previous 12 months, with boys significantly more likely to carry than girls. The same report found that 5% of teenagers had carried any type of weapon, which could include sticks or clubs, firearms or replica guns, drinking glasses, stones, bricks or concrete, keys, bottles, stationery (e.g. pens or rulers), cigarette lighters, or chemicals (such as acid).

A range of exacerbating factors, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), school exclusion, and gang involvement, were found to increase the likelihood that a young person would carry a weapon. These relationships are illustrated in the graph below.

**Figure 3.2: Proportion of 13–17-year-olds in England and Wales who have carried a weapon in the past 12 months by vulnerabilities to violence**



While any level of weapon-carrying is too high, it is vital to take a social norms approach and focus on the fact that **95% of 13–17-year-olds have not carried any weapon, and 98% have not carried a knife**. It is usual for young people not to carry a weapon, and this should be made clear to the children and young people in schools.

The Merseyside VRP data hub brings together information on violence from Accident and Emergency departments, the ambulance service and the police; this data can be split by demographics, type of violence, location of incident, and for police data split by victim and offender.

Data is also available on police stop and searches (including for weapons) and from the fire and rescue service on deliberate fires.

The hub allows for identification of at-risk groups for violence, hotspot locations, and trends over time. The hub also holds data on wider contextual factors including levels of deprivation and educational data, specifically school characteristics, e.g. pupils requiring SEN support, pupils eligible for free school means, as well as data on school absence rates, suspensions, and exclusions.

This data is mapped at a school level.



## Online Exposure

Online violence is widespread and a deeply influential part of children's lives. According to the Youth Endowment Fund's 2025 report, **nearly 70% of teenagers had seen violence shared on social media**, including fights, threats, weapons, and the glorification of both physical and sexual violence.

Exposure online is much more common than witnessing violence in person, making the online environment a significant driver of fear, anxiety, and distrust and normalising violence among young people. The prevalence of violent content online means that many children are regularly encountering material that shapes how they see and interact with or withdraw from their communities.

The impact extends beyond viewing harmful content: **over 80% of teenagers had encountered online conversations about harming specific groups**, and more than a third had engaged with these discussions, either by supporting or challenging them. Such interactions normalise hostile attitudes and can contribute to cycles of aggression both online and offline.

These digital environments can heighten young people's sense of vulnerability and make violence feel more pervasive in their daily lives. The report highlights that provocative and polarising online content reaches children at highly impressionable ages, influencing their behaviour, tolerance of difference, emotional wellbeing, and understanding of acceptable social norms. This has wider implications on social cohesion and the future openness of our society.

## Safeguarding and Vulnerabilities

Children and young people may encounter weapons or violence directly or indirectly, with experiences, risks and perceptions varying significantly between communities and individuals. Schools should be cognisant of their local context, taking account of pupils' age, experience and known vulnerabilities.

Positive safeguarding through the curriculum and as part of a whole school approach avoids fear based, sensational or stereotypical narratives. Instead, promoting trauma-informed practice, accurate messaging and strategies to ensure that learning is as safe as possible.

All school staff should be clear about their particular safeguarding procedures, and these should always be followed. Any concerns or disclosures arising from whole school approaches to violence reduction should be handled in line with school policy and multi agency arrangements.

## A Weapon Is Found on School Premises

It is highly unusual for weapons to be taken into school, but in the event of this happening, if you believe that you, a child, or anyone else is in immediate danger, call 999 straight away. This includes situations where you think a child may use the weapon on themselves or others.

If there is no immediate danger - for example, if a weapon is found on school premises but no one is carrying or brandishing it, then follow the procedures set out by Merseyside Police in the guidelines below.

# Weapons Guidance for Schools

## Weapon found (unattended not in possession)

- Recover weapon and secure in a safe location
- Capture image and retain for school records/ potential sharing with Police.

Does information exist linking the weapon to a young person/child?

**YES**

Safeguard using your own policy and report to Merseyside Police

[Report a crime or incident | Merseyside Police](#)

**NO**

Report as intelligence.

[Community partnership intelligence | Merseyside Police](#)

If you can safely dispose of the weapon do so. If you can't safely dispose of the weapon, contact Merseyside Police.

## Young person in possession of a weapon (this is highly likely a criminal offence)

- Document disclosure using own school policy
- Consider safety for yourself, children and staff within the school premises.

If it is safe to do so and the environment is calm, as per the [Searching, Screening and Confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) school to consider searching the pupil and recovering the weapon.

When the weapon has been recovered, you **MUST** report as soon as reasonably possible, to police via 101 or online report. [Report a crime or incident | Merseyside Police](#)

Separate and secure weapon in a safe location

- Safeguard the young person/people as per school policy
- Contact parent/guardian
- Is there any ongoing risk/threat that needs managing?

## Information around a young person, having access to weapons, social media, hearsay etc...

Document disclosure/information through school policy

Safeguard the young person/people

Consider risk management plan for wider school safety

You **MUST** report as intelligence to police  
[Community partnership intelligence | Merseyside Police](#)

You **MUST** report as intelligence to police  
[Community partnership intelligence | Merseyside Police](#)

## If a young person is using a weapon to self-harm

If in the act of self-harming, call 999

If not in the act, however you have information to suggest that the young person may have thoughts of using a weapon, for self-harm, follow safeguarding procedures that are internal to the school.

# STOP

## Effective Teaching to Prevent Knife Crime

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) has a significant role to play in reducing violence and knife crime. In part, this can involve teaching specifically about gangs, violence and weapons, but more broadly it is the culmination of all of the learning that takes place in the whole PSHE curriculum.

This includes developing attitudes and a sense of self that enables a young person to be confident in their own ethical framework, alongside the skills around decision-making, understanding consequences and managing pressure and risk to be able to put this into practice.

Additionally, a PSHE curriculum that promotes self-esteem, resilience, a sense of belonging and respect, empathy and kindness for others develops protective traits in the individual and the community, reducing the likelihood that children and young people will be attracted to gangs and crime to have their need for a sense of belonging met.

The curriculum should be planned in such a way that learning is consolidated and built on incrementally through a child's time at school, rather than one-off lessons or events.

This protective learning developed over time is likely to include:

- supporting the development of positive mental wellbeing, reflection, self-esteem and self-belief, empathy, respect, resilience and compassion
- developing skills of critical thinking, communication, resisting pressure and conflict resolution
- learning about and practising the skills of healthy relationships including friendships
- opportunities to practise saying 'no!' and walking away in a variety of situations
- opportunities to practise seeking help in a variety of situations
- encouraging children to have a voice and have agency
- learning about safety, risk, choices, consequences in a variety of situations

Additionally, social and emotional learning should be planned into the PSHE curriculum including recognising, naming and managing emotions and stress, and thoughtful decision-making in crunch moments of conflict or pressure.

Strategies such as naming emotions, problem-solving and calming techniques can then be revisited and reinforced across the school day to embed mental and emotional wellbeing, healthier responses to challenging situations and reduce the likelihood of impulsive or harmful behaviours.

# Safe Teaching to Prevent Knife Crime

A safe PSHE approach to reducing knife crime starts with a cohesive planned and sequenced programme that builds knowledge and skills over time. That means avoiding one-off assemblies and shock and scare tactics in favour of evidence-based, taught units of learning that develop social and emotional skills, relationships education, and confident help-seeking.

## Risk-assess learning

Before delivering any violence-related PSHE content, identify any safeguarding concerns or emotional triggers. You may not be aware of every child's vulnerability, so always teach as though a child in the room is affected by the content being delivered. This will ensure that you do not use language that stigmatises or teaching strategies that have the potential to retraumatise. Inform pastoral staff.

## Inform relevant colleagues

Pastoral staff or others who provide support for students should be briefed in advance of any lessons that may require them to respond to emotional fallout or offer follow-up support where needed.

## Forewarn pupils known to be vulnerable

Give advance notice to pupils who you know may find the lesson content distressing, offering them a "heads up" so that they do not feel exposed or vulnerable if the subject matter is particularly pertinent to them. Consider additional support, and a safe and discrete "exit plan" if necessary.

## Know students' starting points

Begin every unit of learning with a baseline assessment to establish what students already understand, as well as any misconceptions. This can be as simple as a mind-map or a "draw and write" activity. This ensures that teaching can be accurately pitched and progress from individual starting points can be meaningfully assessed.

## Ground rules

Have a clear set of PSHE ground rules agreed with the class to ensure respectful and non-judgemental learning. Ground rules might include respectful listening, not making assumptions about others, not asking personal questions and having the right to pass.

## Teaching delivered primarily by teachers who know their students well

PSHE should be planned and taught by trained teachers who understand pupils' needs and context, know the school's safeguarding policy and procedures and will be available for pupils after the lessons should there be any follow-up needed.

## Distancing techniques

Fictional scenarios, case studies and hypothetical situations allow pupils to explore sensitive and challenging aspects of PSHE in a way that is objective, rather than emotional, and discourages public disclosures. A pupil who is asked to imagine themselves in a challenging or traumatic situation or to relive a difficult experience is unlikely to be able to engage effectively with the learning and may experience emotional distress.

## Taking a social norms approach

A social norms approach is valuable when teaching about knife crime because it helps young people understand that carrying a weapon is not typical or usual behaviour among young people. Many teenagers overestimate how common knife-carrying is, and those misperceptions can drive harmful choices as they try to fit in or seek social approval. By clearly highlighting the actual norms - that the overwhelming majority of young people do not carry knives or weapons—teachers can reduce the sense of pressure or inevitability that some pupils feel. This approach supports safer decision-making and empowers pupils with a more realistic understanding of their community.

## Avoid shock, fear and shame tactics

Using shock, fear or shame in PSHE is ineffective and potentially harmful. Young people react unpredictably to fear, and adolescents may even find risky behaviours appealing when they are sensationalised. Shock messages can be quickly blocked or dismissed by the brain, becoming less credible over time, while worst-case scenarios can lead to desensitisation or a belief that "it won't happen to me." Additionally, such approaches risk retraumatizing pupils. Creating opportunities for students to make calm, balanced, measured choices empower them in their lives and provides a safer way of teaching.



# External Providers

## MVRP Delivering Violence Reduction Learning with Ext Partners 06\_21\_16pp AW.indd

Teachers and other members of the school community are best placed to deliver learning which supports violence prevention because they can contribute towards shaping attitudes early, model positive norms and challenge beliefs that tolerate harm. PSHE lessons are reinforced by everyday interactions, classroom climate and consistent boundaries to contribute to a culture that reduces the risk of violence. Teachers can support the development of respect, empathy, and safety across all lessons and routines.

If a setting chooses to invite an external provider to deliver any sessions, this should only be to enrich learning already delivered by teachers and should not be the students' only access to a particular theme or topic. Schools should be clear about the learning objectives being met, the content being delivered and have confidence that the approach coheres with that of the school and principles of safe and effective PSHE.

That means avoiding one-off assemblies and shock and scare tactics in favour of evidence-based learning that develops social and emotional skills, relationships education and confident help-seeking. Teachers should prepare pupils beforehand, plan carefully, and consider how sensitive content may affect individuals.

*1.3 Because of the difficult and complex issues raised in violence reduction activities and the reactions these may elicit from pupils and the community; there are sensitivities that need to be recognised when involving third parties or accessing external resources.*

*The pan-Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Group (MACE) has noted the need for schools to ensure external organisations, or lived-experience trainers, deliver in a trauma-informed way and that they demonstrate viewing safeguarding as an ultimate priority. P.4*

## Handling Sensitive Questions

Children's questions are often the most daunting aspect of teaching PSHE, and teachers may worry that they will be 'caught out.' Children's questions should be welcomed, and it is a testament to teachers that their pupils feel safe and confident asking questions. They will often arise from curiosity, but also from myths and misunderstandings, or worries and concerns personal to them.

How teachers respond to these questions plays a crucial role in maintaining trust and promoting open dialogue. Providing opportunities for anonymous questions using an 'ask-me-anything-box' or 'ask-it-basket' can help those who feel embarrassed or anxious about speaking in front of peers, while also giving teachers time to consider accurate, age-appropriate responses.

When unsure or unable to give an immediate factual response to a question, teachers should:

- thank the pupil for their question
- explain that they need more thinking time before answering
- after the lesson, seek further guidance from colleagues, including considering any safeguarding implications
- before the next lesson decide whether a question should be answered publicly or privately

Personal questions whether from the teacher or pupils should not be allowed in PSHE lessons as this can make a child feel exposed, vulnerable and inhibit learning.

# Parental Engagement: Conversation Starters

PSHE education is most effective when it is a partnership between families and schools. Sharing key messages and strategies with families can enable them to support the learning already taking place in school.

Talking about knife crime can feel overwhelming, and the goal isn't to instil fear, but to create a calm, open space where young people feel heard, supported, and informed.

The prompts below are designed to help parents and carers open up conversations with their children:

*"Have you ever seen anything online or at school that made you feel worried about knives or safety?"*

*"What do your friends think about knives? Do you ever feel pressure to fit in with their choices?"*

*"Do you feel safe when you're out and about? Is there anything that makes you feel unsafe?"*

*"Some people think carrying a knife makes them safer – why do you think that is, and what do you think the reality might be?"*

*"Did you know that most young people don't carry knives? What do you think stops them?"*

*"What do you think might happen if someone is caught carrying a knife – even if it wasn't theirs?"*

*"Why do you think some young people feel they don't have a choice about carrying a knife?"*

*"How might carrying a knife make a situation more dangerous rather than safer?"*

*"If a friend asked you to hold something for them that made you uncomfortable, what would you do?"*

*"If you were with friends and something didn't feel right, who could you talk to or contact?"*

*"If you saw someone with a knife at school or online, what do you think the safe next step would be?"*

*"What do you think of the choices that this person / character made? What might they have done differently?" (in reference to a news story, film or television programme).*

*"Which friends or groups make you feel good about yourself and help you stay safe?"*

*"Would you like to get involved in more clubs/ activities in the community? Which ones appeal to you?"*

*"What kind of support do you think young people need to stay safe today?"*

*"Is there anything you've been unsure about or worried to tell me?"*

## A Whole-School Approach

Beyond the PSHE lesson, the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) stresses the centrality of ensuring attendance at school and avoiding exclusion. Persistent absence and exclusion are significant multipliers in a young person's likelihood to engage in weapon-carrying and violence.

YEF highlights the value of both attendance strategies e.g. parent/carer meetings and breakfast clubs, and consistent, well-designed behaviour support systems that reduce the need for exclusion. If a student is suspended or excluded, appropriate support should be provided to ensure that they remain connected to education rather than becoming further marginalised.

Central to this approach is the development of meaningful, trusting relationships between students and adults in the school community. YEF guidance emphasises that children benefit from having access to trained, supportive adults - such as mentors or sports coaches, who can offer stability and guidance, particularly for those who may be more vulnerable to harm. These relationships act as protective buffers, helping young people navigate challenges and reducing the likelihood of involvement in violence.

Finally, YEF recommends that schools carefully analyse when and where violence is most likely to occur—such as specific corridors, outdoor spaces or times of day, and focus supervision and interventions accordingly. This '*targeted hotspots*' strategy ensures that resources are deployed where they can make the greatest difference.

## Education Practice Insight Creator

<https://insights.youthendowmentfund.org.uk/epic>

The EPIC tool is a free, online self-assessment designed to help schools quickly evaluate how well their current practice aligns with evidence-based strategies for keeping vulnerable pupils safe and engaged. Staff answer 37 practical questions about attendance, behaviour, mentoring, social emotional support, and safeguarding, rating their setting from "*never*" to "*always*."

The tool then generates an anonymous, personalised insights report with clear feedback, suggested next steps, and links for further reading. Schools can download results, share them with colleagues, compare their responses to national or regional averages.

If as many schools as possible use the tool and agree to share the outcomes with Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, it will support coordinated improvement.

## Supporting Documents and Websites

- A Whole School Approach to Supporting Loss, Separation & Bereavement: [Bereavement Support | SIL](#)
- Ariel Trust: [login – Ariel School Hub](#)
- Ben Kinsella Trust: [Resources for teachers and practitioners | The Ben Kinsella Trust](#)
- British Red Cross: [Knife crime | British Red Cross](#)
- Crime data from the Office for National Statistics: [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)
- Crimestoppers
  - County Lines Workbook: [County-Lines-workbook-DIGITAL-compressed.pdf](#)
  - Knife Crime Workbook: [Knife-Crime-workbook-DIGITAL-compressed.pdf](#)
- Delivering Violence Reduction Learning with External Partners [MVRP Delivering Violence Reduction Learning with Ext Partners 06\\_21 16pp AW.indd](#)
- Education Practice Insight Creator <https://insights.youthendowmentfund.org.uk/epic>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: [Keeping Children Safe In Education 2025](#)
- #KnifeFree: [Knife Free Lesson Plan for KS3](#)
- MVP website: [Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership](#)
- No Knives Better Lives: [Better-Lives.pdf](#)
- OFSTED Inspection Toolkit [State-funded school inspection toolkit version 1.1](#)
- [PAN Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol](#)
- Parent Talk: [Help if you're worried about your child and knife crime](#)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, and teachers (published July 2025 for implementation by September 2026): [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#)
- Serious Violence Duty Preventing and reducing serious violence Statutory Guidance for responsible authorities (December 2022): [Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance](#)
- Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group [Home - TIIG](#) for localised data on hotspot areas
- Victim Care Merseyside [Gun and Gang Crime: Victim Care Merseyside](#)
- Youth Endowment Fund Children and Violence surveys and data: [Children, Violence and Vulnerability 2025 | Youth Endowment Fund](#)
- Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence: [Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit](#)
- Youth Endowment Fund Education, Children and Violence Whole-School Recommendations [Education guidance | Youth Endowment Fund](#)
- The Ben Kinsella Trust: [Knife crime lesson plans and resources](#)
- British Red Cross: [Knife crime lesson plans](#)
- Eyes Open Campaign to stop criminal exploitation <https://eyes-open.co.uk>

# Webinar Resources

## Webinar 1

- <https://insights.youthendowmentfund.org.uk/epic>

## Webinar 2

Children, violence and vulnerability 2024

*REPORT 1: Who is affected by violence?*

- [https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24\\_R1\\_OverallViolence.pdf](https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24_R1_OverallViolence.pdf)

*REPORT 2: What role does social media play in violence affecting young people?*

- [https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24\\_R2\\_Online.pdf](https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24_R2_Online.pdf)

*REPORT 3: How do boys and girls experience violence?*

- [https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24\\_R3\\_Gender.pdf](https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24_R3_Gender.pdf)

*REPORT 4: What do children and young people think about the police?*

- [https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24\\_R4\\_Police.pdf](https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CVV24_R4_Police.pdf)

## REPORT 5

- Positive activities, youth clubs and trusted adults
- Coming soon

Scouse Drill: <https://youtu.be/tPPETe8hoyk>

## Webinar 3

### Further Resources

- <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/getmedia/dcbeaada-eb75-4257-a8fa-ce0dcf39f1fd/Knife-Crime-workbook-DIGITAL-compressed.pdf>
- <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/getmedia/dbd88eab-295d-43b5-ab3e-943be22d1826/County-Lines-workbook-DIGITAL-compressed.pdf>
- [www.staffordshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/staffordshire/campaigns/ditchtheblade/teacher-resource---ks3-knife-free-lesson-plan.pdf](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/staffordshire/campaigns/ditchtheblade/teacher-resource---ks3-knife-free-lesson-plan.pdf)
- [https://benkinsella.org.uk/resources-for-teachers-and-practitioners/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAlalQobChMI2LHVzJOUhgMVszRQBh1tSAmzEAAAYASABEgJWPvD\\_BwE](https://benkinsella.org.uk/resources-for-teachers-and-practitioners/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlalQobChMI2LHVzJOUhgMVszRQBh1tSAmzEAAAYASABEgJWPvD_BwE)
- [www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/knife-crime](http://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/knife-crime)
- [www.noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Better-Lives\\_Final-Final.pdf](http://www.noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Better-Lives_Final-Final.pdf)
- [https://noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/No\\_Knives\\_Better\\_Lives\\_-\\_Playing\\_it\\_Safe\\_Digital\\_RGB.pdf](https://noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/No_Knives_Better_Lives_-_Playing_it_Safe_Digital_RGB.pdf)
- <https://eyes-open.co.uk>

## Webinar 4

*What's the law on knife crime?*

- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IB0vSKAd0o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IB0vSKAd0o)

### Consequences

- A Mother's Story: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzGScorVrtA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzGScorVrtA)
- A Police officer's Story: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjenz4XqZUY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjenz4XqZUY)
- An A&E doctor's Story: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-sussex-54636293](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-sussex-54636293)

### Who is Guilty of Murder?

- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=F76wZgCtFlo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F76wZgCtFlo)

### Success

- Film 1. success\_part 1 on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/1053425776/b2767033fa>)
- Film 1. success\_part 2 on Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/1053425684/c4b5d87045>)

### Further Resources

- <https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/feelings-behaviour/safety-wellbeing/child-knife-crime/#:~:text=Get%20support&text=The%20Ben%20Kinsella%20Trust%20has%20more%20information%20for%20parents%20or,re%20worried%20about%20a%20child>
- <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/getmedia/dcbeaada-eb75-4257-a8fa-ce0dcf39f1fd/Knife-Crime-workbook-DIGITAL-compressed.pdf>
- <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/getmedia/dbd88eab-295d-43b5-ab3e-943be22d1826/County-Lines-workbook-DIGITAL-compressed.pdf>
- [www.staffordshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/staffordshire/campaigns/ditchtheblade/teacher-resource---ks3-knife-free-lesson-plan.pdf](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/staffordshire/campaigns/ditchtheblade/teacher-resource---ks3-knife-free-lesson-plan.pdf)
- [https://benkinsella.org.uk/resources-for-teachers-and-practitioners/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=EAlalQobChMI2LHVzJOUhgMVszRQBh1tSAMzEAAAYASABEgJWPvD\\_BwE](https://benkinsella.org.uk/resources-for-teachers-and-practitioners/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAlalQobChMI2LHVzJOUhgMVszRQBh1tSAMzEAAAYASABEgJWPvD_BwE)
- [www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/knife-crime](http://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/knife-crime)
- [www.noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Better-Lives\\_Final-Final.pdf](http://www.noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Better-Lives_Final-Final.pdf)
- [https://noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/No\\_Knives\\_Better\\_Lives\\_-\\_Playing\\_it\\_Safe\\_Digital\\_RGB.pdf](https://noknivesbetterlives.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/No_Knives_Better_Lives_-_Playing_it_Safe_Digital_RGB.pdf)
- <https://eyes-open.co.uk>

### Webinar 5

- [www.merseysidepcc.info/media/0xlhboqx/final-a4-svd-strategy-condensed.pdf](http://www.merseysidepcc.info/media/0xlhboqx/final-a4-svd-strategy-condensed.pdf)
- [www.naswt.org.uk/advice/in-the-classroom/children-and-young-people/serious-violence-duty.html](http://www.naswt.org.uk/advice/in-the-classroom/children-and-young-people/serious-violence-duty.html)
- [www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/offensive-weapons-knives-bladed-and-pointed-articles](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/offensive-weapons-knives-bladed-and-pointed-articles)



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Partnership

