



13 May 2024

Dear [insert school]

A message from West Midlands Police.

During 13 – 19 May 2024, you might see intensified action from your local officers around knife crime and tackling serious youth violence as part of #Sceptre week.

Police and schools across the West Midlands are committed to working together to protect our young people from becoming victims of knife crime, but to do this we need your help.

Being aware of the warning signs and understanding the importance of talking to your students about carrying weapons can significantly reduce knife crime, exploitation, anti-social behaviour and gang activity.

Your students might not be involved in knife crime or be around those who carry a knife, but it's important they understand the dangers and are equipped with the knowledge on how to report knife crime. Our school officers are always available to visit your school to deliver presentations and 121 interventions where needed.

[How to have THAT conversation with your students:](#)

1. Find a quiet and comfortable time to chat.
2. They might be reluctant to talk to you. So open use a recent news event as a conversation starter.
3. Discuss knives and how you both feel about them being used – you're there to listen and support them.
4. Tell them even when they feel they don't have choices, they do.
5. Explain that knives do not give protection. Carrying one could be a prison sentence or getting hurt yourself.
6. Say the bravest thing to do is walk away from a dangerous situation.
7. Explore excuses for your students to walk away, e.g., picking up a little brother from school, running errands for their family, meeting a mate, or attending a sports club.
8. Reassure them that most people do not carry knives.

West Midlands Police Campaign – Let's Talk About Knife Crime

In our new video campaign, 'Let's talk about knife crime', Craig, Will, Nikita, and Paul openly discuss commonly asked questions about knife crime. They also give their thoughts on how young people can make different and more informed choices that can change their life. This series of short videos will be released on Monday 13th May to coincide with #Sceptre week – an intensified week of action that focuses on bringing awareness to the dangers of knife carrying and reducing serious youth violence.

On the panel, we feature two young people who have different experiences of knife crime. Will - once involved in knife crime and gang culture - gives brutally honest truths about the consequences of knife carrying and offers reassurance to young people that there is a way out.

Also, on the panel is Nikita – the sister of Ronan who tragically lost his life in 2022 after a case of mistaken identity – who openly talks about the devastating affects knife crime has on family and friends.

To offer insight into West Midland Police diversion programmes, Paul from our CIRV (Community Initiative to Reduce Violence) speaks more about how there is more help out there than you think.





'Let's talk about knife crime' is being delivered across the West Midlands to young people to help them realise the stark reality of carrying a knife.

This will be delivered by our officers in schools and via social media, such as TikTok and Snapchat. Filmed in a podcast and more relaxed setting, we hope these videos will help people talk more openly about knife crime and feel more ease when reporting knife carrying.

The series covers a range of different themes including what to do if you're carrying a knife, how to get help, the impact on knife crime has on families, and the consequences of knife association.

Our hope is that young people feel more confident to report knife crime or information about exploitation.

You can watch all the videos on our YouTube or full content and supporting information can be found on our Life or Knife website: <https://lifeorknife.west-midlands.police.uk/>

How we are protecting young people:

A number of initiatives are underway across local communities to tackle knife and weapon related crime, with increased focus this week, as part of #Sceptre.

Some examples are:

- Police and community-led weapons sweeps in parks and open spaces. This aims to recover weapons hidden for use in offences.
- Test purchase operations and responsible retailer visits to ensure retailers are complying with the law on the sale of knives.
- A strong focus on the identification, arrest and management of offenders who use knives.
- Proactive police operations within key locations in the community to identify and tackle weapon related crime.
- School and college engagement to ensure students are informed of the law, risks and consequences of carrying knives. This is being supported within secondary schools and colleges with the delivery of random knife bar searches.

What to do if you are concerned about a young person:

Speak to them calmly and explain the risks and consequences of carrying a knife.

You can visit <https://lifeorknife.west-midlands.police.uk/> to learn more.

You may wish to contact a member of the Pastoral Team at school if you feel your child isn't listening or is at risk. You can reach out your school's officers to seek advice. They can talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together.

Anyone can dispose of a knife discreetly and anonymously at a weapon surrender bin. See all locations here: <https://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/tackling-violence/weapon-surrender-bins/>

If you or your students are aware that other young people in school or the community are carrying weapons, you should contact the police directly on 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency). If a crime is taking place or a life is in danger, call 999 immediately. Alternatively, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Thank you. West Midlands Police.

