



WILTSHIRE POLICE

Dear parents, guardians, and carers

We need to talk about knife crime

Nationally we continue to see a rise in serious violence, and tragically incidents of knife crime that have occurred across the country, with devastating impacts on individuals and families.

Across Wiltshire knife crime has remained stable over the last few years and is lower than in other towns and cities. However, that does not mean it doesn't happen here or that we should become complacent in our approach, and we still need to take steps to prevent this awful crime happening.

We know most young people are not involved in criminal activity, nor would they ever dream of carrying a knife or bladed weapon. But sadly, we know that possession of knives is on the rise nationally. Young people hear about it on the news, they talk about it at school, and we know, because they tell us, they would carry a knife for protection. However, we know that carrying a knife means you are more likely to find yourself in a situation where you could get seriously injured or even killed.

Education plays a vital role, and you are receiving this letter because your child's school has been invited to participate in a weapons awareness lesson called the Blunt Truth. This is promoted by Wiltshire Police supported by NHS Emergency Medical Practitioners.

Please be aware that the session includes a video which has some swearing and briefly shows images of a knife wound. The students will be made aware of this and encouraged to talk through any concerns they may have.

We need to get to a position in our communities, within peer groups, and within families where carrying a knife or blade is not just frowned upon, it is seen as completely unacceptable.

So, alongside the school session, we would encourage you to think about discussing this issue within your family. Some websites providing guidance and advice are listed at the end of this letter.

Keeping Wiltshire Safe

These conversations can be difficult, and you won't always have the answers. Information about knife crime is available on the Wiltshire Police website, along with links to specialist websites offering further advice, guidance and support for both young people and parents, guardians and carers.

What to do if you are concerned for your child/young person

- Speak to them calmly and explain the risks and consequences. Further advice on talking to your child is available at: www.noknivesbetterlives.com/parents/having-the-conversation

- 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.

- 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

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

Further Resources and information:

No knives, Better Lives is a dedicated website for practitioners, trusted adults, and Young people. Consisting of education films, lesson plans and activity resources from primary age upwards and includes guidance about how to raise this issue and talk to your child: <http://noknivesbetterlives.com/>

#knifefree: www.knifefree.co.uk

kNOwknives Facebook page

CrimeStoppers is an anonymous reporting service specifically for adults and is the sister company of Fearless: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org> **0800 555 111**.

Fearless is a site designed specifically for young people. You can access non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality including knife crime. It can also be used as an anonymous reporting tool for young people: <https://www.fearless.org>

The **NSPCC** is a children's charity, dedicated to supporting children and trusted adults for most situations providing useful information and resources: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Childline offers help to anyone under nineteen in the UK with any issue they're going through. They can talk about anything, big or small, their trained counsellors are there to support: <https://www.childline.org.uk> **0800 1111**.

Proud to serve and protect our communities

UK Safer Internet Centre promotes the safe and responsible use of technology for young people. They have a lot of advice on all subjects digital as well as allowing you to understand how to report anything suspicious:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk>

The Children's Society have a section of online material and resources specifically aimed at parents, caregivers and professionals who are supporting young people involved in county lines: <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/tackling-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines/county-lines-resources>

Victim support provide support services for victims of crime:

www.victimsupport.org.uk

We hope that you have found this information useful. Should you have any questions please contact the Wiltshire Police Youth and Early Intervention Team using the email addresses below:

youth@wiltshire.police.uk

youthswindon@wiltshire.police.uk