



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

Dear parent/carer,

I am sure you are only too aware of the risks that come with the carrying of knives in public and want to do everything you can to protect your children. You will have read about the significant issues reported in the national press regarding gangs, violence and knife crime amongst young people. Whilst most issues reported concern stories in and around London and the larger cities, it is true that Staffordshire, like many other counties, is also affected.

We want to reassure you that you are not receiving this letter because your school has a problem with knives but it's important you know the risks and what you can do to help.

Between Monday 9 November and Sunday 15 November 2020 we are running our Ditch the Blade campaign. This will include a series of podcasts which aim to help parents and carers understand how they can talk to children about knife crime. You will hear from a parent with lived experience, as well as some of the agencies that help tackle the issue and work with young people. These will be publicised on Staffordshire Police's social media pages.

We know that the overwhelming majority of young people will never be affected by knife crime but a conversation with your child will help us collectively make a difference. This letter and week of action forms just a small part of the ongoing partnership work between ourselves, schools, councils and agencies across the county, working together to tackle the issue.

If you have a knife you wish to dispose of we would encourage you to hand it in. In every home in the county you will find kitchen knives but this option is designed to allow the disposal of other knives which are surplus to requirements, such as ornamental, ex-military or combat style weapons, which could easily end or ruin a life if used recklessly. Unfortunately, the majority of knives and bladed articles that we find young people in possession of have come from their own homes, so if you don't need it - just bin it. You can do so without any risk of prosecution at either Burton, Cannock or Longton police stations. You can dispose of normal kitchen knives at many recycling centres, where they can be placed in the scrap metal containers.

You can find more information about knife crime and our campaign, including what to do if you have concerns, on the webpage www.staffordshire.police.uk/ditchtheblade

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Best wishes,

Chief Inspector Mark Smith
Operational Support, Staffordshire Police