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Nottingham
City Council

12 February 2018 (updated 22 October)

Knife Crime and the Role of Schools in Nottingham

Knife crime is a major concern nationally and in particular for the risk it poses to young people. As you will be aware, carrying a knife puts a young person at risk of being harmed by a knife. Possession of a knife can impact on a young person's future and the use of a knife has consequences for both victim and offender.

Schools in Nottingham play an important role in preventing knife crime, and the attached guidance explains a new range of resources to support schools. The Guidance also offers advice on how schools should respond to the presence or use of knives or other weapons on school premises.

Although we have used the phrase 'knife crime' the focus is on safeguarding children and young people and we are all committed to the vision of Nottingham as an early intervention city. The Street Aware programme that we have run in primary schools for a number of years has been positively evaluated by Nottingham Trent University but with suggestions for updating the programme and for its extension to secondary schools and we have now done this.

Nottingham Trent University has positively evaluated the Street Aware programme which has been running in primary schools for a number of years. From this evaluation there were suggestions to update the programme as well as extending the programme in to secondary schools; both have been completed.

Key to developing this work has been input from colleagues in schools and we would particularly like to thank Claire Bamford, Tracey Keeling and Louise McDonagh for their support and advice.

There is interest nationally in the correlation between increases in knife crime offences and school exclusions. We don't know how these trends are linked – if they are linked - but we are keen to work with you to get the balance right as we look after the needs and safety of our children and young people.

Yours sincerely

ACC Kate Meynell
Nottinghamshire Police

Alison Michalska
Corp. Director Children & Adults
Nottingham City Council

Knives and Weapons: Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools (including Alternative Provision) v2

This guidance has been developed to support knife crime reduction but will also be relevant to any other behaviour involving violence or potential violence.

Key to developing this work has been input from colleagues in schools and we would particularly like to thank Claire Bamford, Tracey Keeling and Louise McDonagh for their support and advice.

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Responding to an Incident of Possession or Use in Your School

The scenarios in which a knife is encountered in school can range enormously from a teacher confiscating a knife found in a child's bag to encountering a pupil threatening another pupil. In cases where there is a risk that the knife may be used and the school is not confident of managing the incident safely the police should be contacted as set out below.

When urgent support from the Police is required

If there is an **immediate risk** of harm then it is appropriate to call 999. This could include a situation where the pupil has fled the school or where the pupil has been contained but is still presenting a risk of harm to staff or pupils.

The School's Response to Knife Incidents in School

Knife crime possession can be an early indicator of further offending if the underlying behaviour is not challenged. It is important that all knife related incidents are dealt with appropriately.

Step 1: Manage any immediate risk of harm, calling in the police where appropriate (see above);

Step 2: Record the details of the incident and report to the Police using 101.

Step 3: assess and record whether there is any ongoing risk of harm from the incident. Of particular importance is the issue of reprisals from any conflict but you should also consider the risks to any potential witnesses, especially pupils.

Step 4: if not already involved, inform the School Designated Safeguarding Lead who may refer to Children's Social Care (using MARF) or the Exploitation and Violence Reduction Hub EVR Hub. Also inform the Police School Early Intervention Officer if one is attached to your school;

Both the Police and the YOT or EVR Hub can then put in measure to reduce any risk of further harm. This should still be done even where the behaviour is out of character or believed to be a response to victimisation. This is important both because of the risk of escalating behaviour and there is also a concern that Schools could be perceived to behave in a discriminatory way.

NB This will mean that the offence will have to be recorded and investigated by the Police who have limited discretion in deciding whether or not refer to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Step 6a As part of the risk assessment, you may decide that the pupil's presence at the school in future is problematic. Despite the seriousness of the offence, it is important that the response in this regard is proportionate for the age of the pupil and the offence. Where a short exclusion is not deemed sufficient, then schools are expected to consider a managed move and only to consider permanent exclusion as a last resort.

Step 6b: Whilst discouraging exclusions, the Council also offers a range of support. A referral to the EVR Hub will consider a range of provision from the statutory and voluntary sector that can be added to support the pupil.

Step 7: Any referral to the Fair Access Panel will only be accepted if it complies with this protocol.

NB: Where a knife or other weapon is found on or near premises, it should be removed immediately and then Police notified to arrange to collect the item (this will normally be done by Police School Early Intervention Officers).

Police Response to Knife and Weapon Incidents

Where Police are informed of a pupil in possession of a knife or weapon then the expectation is that the police response to a knife or bladed article incident will be robust and result in a swift and clear outcome for the young person. Where deemed necessary, police officers can arrest the young person, and where threats have been made or other aggravating factors exist, the young person is likely to be charged. A young person found in possession of a knife or bladed article in public or on school premises should expect to receive a Youth Conditional Caution as a minimum outcome. Attached is guidance that has been issued to all police staff and officers in October 2018.

Providing information to the Police (S6)

Feedback from schools is that they often have information that they think the Police should be aware of but aren't sure of the best way to submit it as its not reporting an incident. Schools now have a special arrangement with the Police to report via Police SEI Officers or in their absence via the YOT Police Officers (Call the Youth Justice Service on 0115 9159400 and ask for YOT Police messages can always be left. They will then pass the information on, normally by inputting to the Police's intelligence system. There is a rigorous process in that system to protect those that supply information. Intelligence is graded and information from a reliable source has more weight than anonymous information. It also helps to be as specific as possible.

NB if you want to explore any of these policing issues in more detail contact your Neighbourhood Policing Inspector who would welcome the opportunity for a sergeant or themselves to work with school staff through staff meeting or training session. Contacts of Inspectors can be found here

<http://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/neighbourhoods>

But are currently 25 Jan. 19:

City Central	Insp Riz Khan	riz.khan@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk
City Centre	Insp Paul Gummer	paul.gummer@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk
City North	Insp Christine Busuttil	christine.busuttil@nottinghamshrie.pnn.police.uk
City South	Insp James Walker	james.walker@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk
City West	Insp Gordon Fenwick	gordon.fenwick@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk

Information for Families and Practitioners

There is a lot of information on how to support young people and children to stay safe. The AskLION website is a good source of information on local organisations that can provide practical support

<https://www.asklion.co.uk/kb5/nottingham/directory/home.page>

This guidance and associated materials will be linked to

Nottingham Safeguarding Children's Board pages

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/children-and-families/safeguarding-children-board>

and to

Nottingham Designated Safeguarding Leads Network.

<http://www.nottinghamschools.org.uk/leadership-and-management-support/partnerships/designated-safeguarding-lead-dsl-network/dsl-resources/>

Prevention: Education Programme

There are numerous pressures on young people to carry a knife or other weapon: one of the strongest currently is the perception that a knife is necessary for self-protection. Challenging this viewpoint is not easy and in the City we now offer a number of learning modules to support schools. The programme builds upon the evaluation of our Street Aware programme on knives, guns and gangs that has been delivered for a number of years in City primary schools. All of the products referred to should be seen as supplements to the wider process of supporting good decision-making that schools promote throughout the curriculum. The programme is based on the premise that whilst any child or young person can pick up a knife, the pressures and life experiences of children vary enormously. Where police staff, normally PCSOs, deliver lessons or assemblies it is required that they have been trained and approved to do so.

Tie r	Description	Delivered by
P1	Street Aware: Knife Crime Module – This is a 1 hour session for Year 6 Pupils that is delivered by PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers) that are part of the Youth Offending Team’s Early Intervention team. The lesson uses a scenario and asks children to explore what they would do to stay safe. There is also the opportunity to discuss any person concerns privately with the Officers at the end. The lesson also encourages children to have a positive relationship with the Police,	YOT PCSOs, N’hood Policing PCSO’s Police SEIOs
S1	Positive Citizenship aimed at supporting pupils to keep safe and to keep each other safe and to be proud of their community. Product intended for use in lessons (possibly on primary transition days)	Schools to provide or arrange provider.
S2	School Assemblies Key messages about law and personal responsibility in relation to knife crime including possession S2a Year 7 and 8 – quiz and discussion to reinforce earlier messages on law, school expectations and good decisions S2b Year 10 – uses a scenario to explore consequences for victim offender and ripple effect to observers, family and community.	SEIOs/ N’hood PCSOs
S3 a	Targeted Groups in Schools – group session with no more than 6 individuals within school that have been identified as being of concern. The module works has been developed by Crimestopper’s young persons project Fearless and materials can be obtained here: https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/order-form .	Schools
S3 b	NEW: EVR Hub has a 6 week programme for small groups delivered by Targeted Youth Support workers.	
S4	Individuals at risk of offending referred to EVR Hub	EVR Hub
S5	Fearless Products In addition to the lesson plan, Crimestoppers have a range of posters and other materials that can be used as schools wish. Printed copies can be ordered or the artwork downloaded	

Tier	Description	Delivered by
	<p>(https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/resources/weapons)</p>	
C1	<p>Parents – The City Council’s Cohesion Service has developed a simple presentation advising parents on the law around knife crime and what they should do if they are worried about a child’s behaviour. The presentation is designed for use in community settings but is also available for schools to use should they wish. Contact: community.cohesion@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</p>	<p>City Council services (Cohesion/Engagement/Neighbourhood Management Voluntary organisations Schools</p>
C2	<p>Signposting Website for Parents and Professionals This webpage is a simple signpost to national organisations providing information, advice and guidance to parents on how to keep your children safe.</p>	

We expect this Guidance to evolve and would welcome feedback and suggestions. Contact steve.harrison@nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

Dealing with Knife Crime Offenders

be aware of the rise of knife crime in Nottinghamshire and of the harm it causes to communities.

This guidance has been prepared in order to support police officers in respect of their decision making when dealing with knife crime. It is **not** intended to remove officer discretion and the need to consider the circumstances of individual cases. However, in order to ensure that knife crime is dealt with robustly and expeditiously, it is important that officers consider using powers of arrest whenever possible.

Similarly, when considering whether to detain, to bail and to charge, officers must bear in mind the need to act to prevent further offending and harm being caused.

1. Necessity to Arrest

Where the necessity criteria to arrest are met for knife/bladed article possession and weapon enabled crime, officers are encouraged to arrest the suspect and not to ask him/her to attend a police station voluntarily for interview regardless of the suspect's age.

An arrest will be lawful only if a constable has reasonable grounds for believing that it is necessary to arrest the person.

The criteria which may justify a belief that an arrest is necessary are:

a) To enable the name of the person in question to be ascertained (in a case where the constable does not know, and cannot readily ascertain, the person's name, or has reasonable grounds for doubting whether a name given by the person as his name is his real name);

(b) Correspondingly as regards the person's address;

(c) To prevent the person in question -

(i) **Causing physical injury to himself or any other person**; this might apply where the suspect has already used or threatened violence against others and it is thought likely that they may assault others if they are not arrested.

(ii) **Suffering physical injury**; this might apply where the suspect's behaviour and actions are believed likely to provoke, or have provoked, others to want to assault the suspect unless the suspect is arrested for their own protection.

iii) Causing loss of or damage to property;

(iv) Committing an offence against public decency (subject to subsection (6)); or

(v) Causing an unlawful obstruction of the highway;

(d) To protect a child or other vulnerable person from the person in question;

(e) To allow the prompt and effective investigation of the offence or of the conduct of the person in question;

(f) To prevent any prosecution for the offence from being hindered by the disappearance of the person in question.

It will be important to be clear about why you consider it is necessary to arrest in the circumstances of each case. When dealing with a person for knife offence, consider these matters;

- Do the circumstances suggest that, in the absence of an arrest, members of the public or the individual her/himself will be at risk of harm?
- Do the circumstances suggest that, in the absence of arrest, a vulnerable person or child may be at risk of harm from the individual?
- Do the circumstances suggest that an arrest will facilitate prompt and effective investigation of the suspected offence? For example, might an arrest ensure evidence is not disposed of? Or, might an arrest be necessary to prevent collusion with co-accused?
- Can I be satisfied that they would not disappear if they were not arrested?

2. Detention

The Custody Sergeant is responsible for determining whether or not an arrested person after arrest.

If the Custody Sergeant has reasonable grounds for believing that the person's detention without being charged is necessary to secure or preserve evidence relating to an offence for which the person is under arrest, or to obtain such evidence by questioning the person, they can authorise the person arrested to be kept in police detention.

Once a suspect is detained, it will be the role of the Custody Sergeant to ensure that the investigation is being conducted diligently and expeditiously. In practical terms this means that the Sergeant exercises their supervisory responsibility by probing what has been done, what is left to be done and pushing for all reasonable

outstanding enquiries which would tend to support guilt or innocence to be completed whilst the person is in custody.

3. Disposal Decisions

16-years-old and over:

First time offenders should be prosecuted (where evidential threshold it met) and either remanded or bailed to court, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where there are two offences under investigation, (e.g. Possession of Bladed Article and PWITS) then the disposal of the possession offence must be progressed without delay, even if bail or RUI is required on other offences.

15-years-old and under:

First time offenders should be issued with a Youth Conditional Caution as a minimum during the first period of detention where the criteria for YCC are met (admission of the offence being one of them). Where there are aggravating factors to the possession offence or history of other offending then there should be careful consideration and consultation with CPS to charge those 15yrs or under.

The Youth Justice Service (YJS, previously YOT) should be consulted for an initial screening assessment during detention for knife crime. If this isn't possible the relevant YJS should be notified of the disposal (Charge/YCC) as soon as possible and at the latest by the next working day.

Where Youth Justice professionals are not available out of hours, the decision maker (Police Sergeant or Prosecutor) will determine the appropriate disposal. The Youth Conditional Caution conditions for a weapon offence have been pre-populated on Niche and must be delivered by a Sergeant.

Is there insufficient evidence to Charge or Youth Conditional Caution without further investigation?

Pre-charge Bail with Conditions should be the OIC, Supervisor and Custody Sergeants first consideration for knife crime offences. Below are the principal bail considerations (Section 3(6) of the Bail Act 1976).

- To prevent the suspect from failing to surrender
- To prevent the suspect of offending whilst on bail
- To prevent the suspect interfering with prosecution witnesses or otherwise obstructing the course of justice
- For the suspect's own protection

Finally, please ensure that a disclaimer has been signed for the weapon prior to release from custody.