



KINGS NORTON  
GIRLS' SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM



Dear Parents/Carers

As part of an on-going partnership campaign against knife crime, police and secondary schools in the area are committed to working together to protect our young people from knives and other weapons.

We will be using a range of tactics including educational inputs, targeted mentoring and in-school knife arches, to ensure that students are well-informed about the consequences of carrying weapons and identify those that may continue to do so.

It is important that the police, schools and families work together to protect children and communities. To do this, parents must be aware of the warning signs and talk to children about carrying weapons. The consequences of being found in possession of a knife are serious and long lasting affecting education, employment and travel opportunities, but most crucially, life.

#### WARNING SIGNS

These signs don't always mean the worst is happening and could just be normal teenage behaviour. Talking about it with your child will help you find out; remember to try to keep calm and listen to their explanation:

1. Has your child withdrawn from the family and/or school?
2. Is their school or college reporting worrying changes in behaviour, academic achievement or attendance?
3. Have they lost interest in positive activities such as sports clubs?
4. Do they stay out unusually late without giving a reason and are vague about his/her whereabouts?
5. Has your child stopped seeing old friends and started hanging out with a new group?
6. Are they secretive about the contents of their bag?
7. Are they defensive if you ask what is in their possession or if they are hiding anything?
8. Has their attitude changed about carrying knives/weapons? For example, justifying it by saying people carry them for self-defence?
9. Have any items gone missing from the kitchen, tool box or garage?
10. Have you found a weapon hidden amongst their possessions?

*Continued overleaf...*

Some young people carry weapons because they feel it will provide protection or increase the respect they are given by their friends, but the sad fact is that they are more likely to become victims of serious violence.

Parents should also be aware that girls sometimes carry or store weapons for their boyfriends or other male friends because they believe they are less likely to be stopped by the police. Their reasons are often misguided loyalty or love, but it is still a crime if they are caught carrying a knife or other weapon.

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED

If you have any concerns about your child or their friends carrying a weapon, speak to them calmly and explain the risks and consequences. If you feel they aren't listening, please contact Mr Gunn at school to talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together.

Please be assured that this is not about criminalising your child, but securing the right support to keep them and others safe from harm.

If your child makes you aware of concerns they might have about other young people in school or the community, you can make a report to the police directly by calling 101. Alternatively you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

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

#### SCHOOL POLICY FOR WEAPONS POSSESSION

It is essential that we work together to reduce the chances of children bringing a weapon to school. Ours, like most other schools, may permanently exclude any student found to be carrying a knife, both on and off the school premises, and the police will usually be informed.

#### THE POLICE RESPONSE TO WEAPONS POSSESSION

Carrying an offensive weapon or carrying a bladed/sharply pointed article in a public place, including on school premises, without good reason are criminal offences.

Offensive weapons can include knives, knuckle-dusters, broken bottles or tools such as spanners and hammers if they are intended by the person carrying them to cause injury to a person.

Where young people are involved in crime, the police will, wherever possible, try to avoid criminalising them and will speak with the young person, their parents, and also seek the views of the headteacher before making a decision as to the best way to deal with an offence. However, **when a weapon is involved, the most likely result will be a charge and a court appearance.**

If you would like to discuss in more detail in the meantime, please contact the school.

Yours faithfully,



**Gill Fox**  
Headteacher  
Kings Norton Girls' School



**Chris Johnson**  
Chief Superintendent  
West Midlands Police

*Schools committed to this joint approach include:*



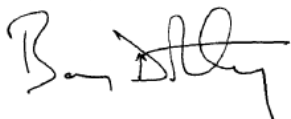
Roger Punton, Principal – Ark Kings Academy



Anthony Hamilton, Headmaster – George Dixon Academy



Damian McGarvey, Acting Headteacher – Balaam Wood School



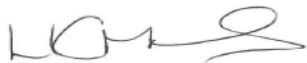
Barry Doherty, Headteacher – Colmers School



Simon Franks, Headteacher – Turves Green Boys' School



Richard Crookes, Headteacher – Turves Green Girls' School



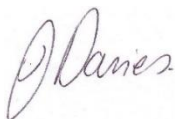
Lucy Monk, Principal – Shenley Academy



Clare Madden, Principal – St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School



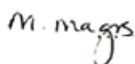
Shamim Akhtar, Head of Provision – Flexible Learning



Julie-Ann Davies, Headteacher – Hillcrest School



Chris Field, Headteacher – Selly Oak Trust School



Michelle Magrs, Headteacher – Selly Park Technology College for Girls



Andrew Dawson, Headteacher – Hunters Hill Technology College