

7th February 2025



Dear parent/carer,

We are writing to you in response to the tragic events that have occurred this week in a Sheffield school. We are aware that this event has created a great deal of anxiety for pupils, parents and staff. Due to the increasing trends in youth violence and knife crime across the country over the last 10 year, schools have been providing educational inputs for young people in schools to educate them about the risks involved.

This letter will set out some of the measures taken by schools within Tipton School Academy Trust in order to reassure parents and carers that schools, working in conjunction with other agencies, including the police, are doing their utmost to ensure pupils are safe. The letter will also signpost parents and carers towards further support and provide guidance around this issue in order to minimise risks to young people.

All TSAT schools deliver a comprehensive Personal Development curriculum to all pupils. This curriculum includes 'How children can keep themselves safe' across a range of scenarios. There is also specific reference to 'The impact of knife crime.'

Schools also deliver a wide range of assemblies that relate to safeguarding. Some of the assembly inputs are delivered by other outside agencies, including the police and the Community Safety Team who provide focussed inputs around the most common risks that young people may face in Sheffield.

Schools also engage with a range of safeguarding networks in order to remain fully informed about any potential risks that are identified across the city. These include:

Community Youth Team [Community Youth Teams | Sheffield City Council](#)
Sheffield Safe Taskforce [Learn Sheffield | By Sheffield. For Sheffield. In Collaboration](#)
Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership [Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership - Home Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership](#)

Our schools are also active members of the Sheffield Crime and Vulnerability Network which is a forum where information is regularly shared that can support schools with any specific concerns based around keeping children safe, led by local intelligence.

We will be using a range of strategies, some of which may include educational inputs, targeted mentoring and in-school searches, to ensure that students are well-informed about the consequences of carrying weapons and identify those at risk of doing 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 do not 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:



Chaucer School, Wordsworth Ave, Sheffield, S5 8NH

Headteacher : Joanna Crewe

enquiries@chaucer.sheffield.sch.uk

www.chaucer.sheffield.sch.uk

1. Incident 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, toolbox or garage?
10. Have you found a weapon hidden amongst their possessions?

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 are not listening, please contact school directly through the enquiries@chaucer.sheffield.sch.uk email address, marked FAO Mrs Crewe, to talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together.

SCHOOL POLICY FOR WEAPON POSSESSION

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

Headteachers and authorised staff have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil may have a prohibited item. The school may utilise a handheld metal detecting wand in order to carry out a search effectively.

Our schools also has a comprehensive Lockdown Procedure that is utilised if there is any specific identified risk to pupils and staff.

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.

We hope that this letter has provided you with some detail as to how TSAT schools are working hard to keep children safe in all settings. The tragic events of this week have put a spotlight on ensuring that children are safe. Please be reminded that these events are still rare across the region but working closely with parents we must be vigilant and have an open dialogue with children about making good choices.

The link below is a resource that is being utilised across Sheffield, by educators, agencies and parents to help provide further advice and guidance. It includes information on anonymous reporting and further advice for parents.

[KTL | Don't let it be a stab in the dark](#)

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for your child's school. Working in partnership with parents is central to improving safety across our schools and the community.

Yours sincerely



Headteacher
Chaucer School

Yours sincerely



Andrew Williams
Chief Inclusion Officer
Tapton School Academy Trust