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Dear Parents/Carers

### **This is a joint letter from the Police and Waverley School**

Police and schools in the city are committed to working together to protect our young people from becoming victims of knife and weapon related crime.

We use a range of tactics including educational inputs and in-school searches to ensure that students are well-informed about the consequences of carrying weapons; and identify those that continue to do so.

It is important that the police, schools and families work together to protect young people. 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 critically the risk to life.

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. However, it is still a crime if they are caught carrying a knife or other weapon.

#### **WARNING SIGNS:**

These signs don't always mean the worst is happening and could just be normal teenage behaviour:

1. Have they become withdrawn from the family and/or school?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 their whereabouts?
5. Have they 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?

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED

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](http://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 - we can talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together.

For the latest guidance and signposting opportunities please visit: [www.policeandschools.org.uk](http://www.policeandschools.org.uk)

## Waverley Behaviour Policy and Pupil Awareness Raising

It is essential that we work together to prevent children bringing a weapon into school. Ours, like most other schools, will take firm action in relation to any student found to be carrying a knife, both on and off the school premises and the police will be informed. The school have carried out 5 're-induction' sessions to Year 7-13 in March 2020, September 2021, October 2021, January 2022 and February 2022. In these sessions we have included education about banned substances and weapons, reiterating our policies after every school holiday.

As stated on page 11 and 12 of the Behaviour Policy:

### **Permanent Exclusion Offences include:**

- Serious or persistent breaches of the schools' policies
- Criminal activity in or out of school which may bring the school into disrepute and cause risk of harm to others
- Possession or Supply of an illegal drug, being under the influence whilst at school or on a trip, or the severe examples of misuse of an illegal drug
- Carrying (or involvement with) an offensive weapon.

### **Search and Confiscation:**

We can carry out searches without consent if we suspect a pupil has the following on his/her possession:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco, cigarette paper
- Vaping devices
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Principal/ and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school

- Any item that the member of staff/Principal reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used: - To commit an offence. - To cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).

### **Weapons:**

It is a criminal offence to bring a knife or offensive weapon into a school. If a pupil is found with a knife, it is likely that they will be questioned by the Police. If a pupil is found in possession of a knife, weapon or any item that could be used to harm others they will be permanently excluded from school.

### THE POLICE RESPONSE TO WEAPONS POSSESSION

Where young people are involved in crime, the police will try to avoid criminalising them. However, carrying a knife or other weapon is very serious and the most likely outcome will be a charge and court appearance or a caution, delivered by the Youth Offending Service.

Update: West Midlands Police can use **Section 60** powers to stop and search young people.

*“Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 gives senior police officers powers to authorise use of stop and search without reasonable grounds, where there is a risk of violence or it is believed that weapons are being carried”.*

If a young person has been stopped by police using **Section 60** powers, it does not necessarily mean they are doing anything wrong, but officers have been given extensive search powers where they can search to prevent violence without needing suspicion that they may be carrying a weapon. This tool is being used to end violence and keep young people safe. West Midlands Police realise that it may be upsetting for some innocent young people, but with fear of weapons growing, we cannot take chances.

If you are aware that a fight or trouble is brewing, or if you hear someone has a knife, please report this to the police. If a young person is scared of someone, the answer is not to carry a knife or weapon.

If you know of an individual, or a group of young people, that are potentially carrying weapons, always contact the Police - via Live Chat: <https://west-midlands.police.uk/contact-us/live-chat> or by calling 101.

Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on: 0800 555 111 | <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

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

Yours faithfully,



Mrs A.Lloyd

Co-Principal – Secondary and Sixth Form Phase

Waverley School

*S. Dosanjh*

Mrs S. Dosanjh

Co-Principal – Primary Phase

Waverley School



**Mat Shaer**

Chief Superintendent

West Midlands Police

**Schools & Colleges in Hodge Hill committed to this joint approach include:**

***City of Birmingham School***

***Eden Boys' Leadership Academy (East)***

***Eden Girls' Leadership Academy***

***Hodge Hill Girls' School***

***Hodge Hill College***

***Rockwood Academy***

***Saltley Academy***

***Starbank School***

***Tile Cross Academy***

***Washwood Heath Academy***

***Waverley School***

***Waverley Studio College***



Waverley  
School  
Learning through diversity