



12th November 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

Knife Crime and Young People

We are writing to ask for your help in tackling knife crime. You will be aware from recent media coverage what the devastating and tragic impact such crime has on families and our wider communities. Although it only directly affects a very small number of people, the fear of being attacked can affect everyone. We want our young people and those who live, work or travel in Ealing to feel safe and free from fear. You can help play a key role in this.

Things you can do to help

We would encourage you to talk about this issue with your family. You can take opportunities to discuss knife crime following news items or when the subject comes up in dramas and films on TV.

Things to discuss with your child

- How they feel about knife crime – are they worried?
- Have they heard or experienced anything that makes them fearful or they think should be shared with you?
- Have they been tempted to obtain a knife for protection or in response to peer pressure? Do they have one already?
- Do any of their friends talk about knives either in person or online?
- What they should do if anyone threatens them i.e. if in person – they should just hand over whatever has been requested – all material goods can be replaced. All threats should then be reported to you and/or the school and police.
- That they need to be vigilant walking to and from school; and at other times when they are alone or with friends. Be aware of what's going on around them and whenever possible walk together with others. Ask them to think about not wearing headphones and exposing mobile phones and other devices when out alone.

Websites offering more advice and guidance can be found at the end of this letter.

Facts about knife crimes

- In Ealing, police encounter few knife-related crimes – and these often come to light only after an arrest for other crimes, or as a result of a serious incident.
- Victims are often unwilling to come forward as they do not wish to be seen to be speaking with the police.
- Many victims and witnesses fear revenge attacks.
- Research shows that individuals carrying a knife are more likely to become a victim of crime.
- Not all knife crime is linked to gang activity. Young people sometimes feel the need to carry knives for reasons such as self-protection; because others carry knives; peer pressure; or to feel they have respect, power or control.

What we're doing about this

- We are actively working with the Police and Youth Service colleagues to encourage discussion in areas where young people meet, ensuring that we are delivering a consistent message.
- We have a YES (Young Ealing Safeguarding) group - teenage volunteers, who provide Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership with a young person's view on safeguarding issues in general. Volunteers go into schools and other venues where young people meet to provide training, information and advice.
- Knife carriers and known offenders are proactively targeted by the police.
- Weapon searches are carried out in schools as a deterrent. This does not indicate that your child's school has a problem.
- Areas of concern in the community are prioritised for police foot patrols.
- Stop and search tactics are used to disrupt criminal activity.
- Knives can be safely deposited in surrender bins to take them out of circulation. There are 10 knife bins around the borough:
 - Acton Town Tube Station – South Acton Ward
 - North Acton Tube Station – East Acton Ward
 - King Street W3 – Acton Central Ward
 - Spring Bridge Road Car Park – Ealing Broadway Ward
 - Ealing Hospital – Norwood Green Ward
 - Greenford Hall – Greenford Broadway Ward
 - Estate Services Office (Fleming Rd) – Dormers Wells Ward
 - Dominion Centre, The Green, Southall – Southall Green Ward
 - Windmill Park Community Centre, Tulip Close – Norwood Green Ward
 - Northolt Leisure Centre, Eastcote Lane – Northolt Mandeville Ward

Our work with schools

The council, through the Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership and the police have been working alongside schools to raise awareness and educate pupils – not only about the very real dangers of possessing a knife but also the fact that anyone caught in possession of an illegal knife can face a prison sentence.

Every school and college can be provided with a knife 'wand' that can detect hidden weapons as part of a London-wide initiative with the Metropolitan Police.

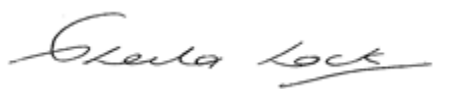
Ealing's High Schools are signed up to receiving **Your Life, You Choose** which is a day-long interactive session delivered to Year 7 pupils which includes impact and consequences of serious violence.

So, there's a lot happening to raise awareness and create opportunities for young people to rethink their activities or any peer pressure they may be facing, also to share their feelings about the risks.

Yours sincerely



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Schools & Children's Services
Ealing Council



Sheila Lock
Independent Chair
Ealing Safeguarding Children Partnership



Joanna Camadoo-Rothwell
Councillor, Community Safety
Ealing Council

Information and Resources

<http://noknivesbetterlives.com> Offers guidance on how to raise this issue and talk to your child.

<https://www.fearless.org/en> This link allows young people to report information about crime 100% anonymously.

You could also look at the Met Police website which provides further advice and guidance.
<https://www.met.police.uk/StopKnifeCrime>

Read details of the knife surrender bins and locations at
<http://ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/knife/>

If you need help or support in relation to concerns about your child or young person you can call Family Lives (formerly Parentline) on **08000 28 22 23** and make your child aware of the support available at **Childline** on **0800 1111**.