

GUNS AND KNIVES

TAKE LIVES

**Information and
Education Pack**



Healthy Schools



South Yorkshire

POLICE

This resource has been produced by South Yorkshire Police. It is designed with teachers and youth workers in mind to stimulate discussion around gun and knife crime issues that are relevant to young people. It provides an opportunity for young people to discuss their attitudes to these issues through various exercises and activities, as well as checking knowledge and understanding.

The contents of this booklet could ideally be introduced as a follow up to the South Yorkshire Police guns and knives presentation to students.

The materials in this booklet and the issues raised are linked to elements of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

Key Concepts

1. Recognising healthy lifestyles and the wellbeing of self and others, depends on information and knowledge and making responsible choices.
2. Understanding risk in both positive and negative terms and understanding that individuals need to

manage risk to themselves and others in a variety of situations.

3. Appreciating that pressure can be used positively or negatively to influence others in situations involving risk.
4. Developing the confidence to try new ideas and face challenges safely, individually and in groups.

At the conclusion of any input session, students should be better able to engage in the key processes identified in the PSHE Personal Wellbeing curriculum. These are:

1. Critical reflection on the key issues surrounding knife and gun possession.
2. The ability to make informed choices and manage risk more safely.

Knives



Aim of subject

- To know what the laws are surrounding knives
- To understand the risks of carrying knives
- To understand the consequences of carrying or using a knife

The law states:

1. Carrying or using a knife that can be used as a weapon in a public place is against the law.
2. Any item or object that could be used to inflict damage to another person, or threaten such actions, is classed as an offensive weapon. This could include things like hammers, corkscrews, or even drawing compasses.
3. If you are caught carrying anything that could be used as an offensive weapon in a public place, you will have to explain to a police officer why you are carrying it. If you cannot give a good reason you may be arrested. Carrying a weapon for your own protection is not an excuse.
4. It is illegal to carry a knife for self-defence.
5. If you use a knife in self-defence you could end up in prison.
6. Carrying a pointed article or an imitation firearm is a serious offence.
7. It is an offence to bring any weapon onto school premises.
8. It is illegal for anyone under 18 to purchase a knife.





Discussion - Agree or Disagree

Start the discussion by reading out the following statements below. You may wish to ask those who agree with the statements to raise their hands or separate into different groups, according to their answers.

Ask one or two of the young people to discuss why they have chosen their answer and encourage discussion to gauge an idea of what the young peoples' attitudes are towards carrying a knife. Ask the question again after the discussion to see if anyone has changed their answer.

1. A lot of young people who say that they carry knives don't really. They are just trying to scare those around them.
2. Carrying a knife makes you feel safer.
3. You are less likely to be bullied or attacked if you are carrying a knife.
4. Knives are a problem – but the media makes the situation sound a lot worse than it is.
5. A knife can do as much damage to someone as a gun.

Q and A Scenarios – What would you do?

Read out the scenarios one by one. Discuss each scenario and the range of options available to the young person in each example. Encourage the students to discuss their feelings towards each situation and what they would do. Things to consider are who would they talk to; police, teacher, parent, friend? Would they call Crimestoppers?

Explore how they would feel if it was a close friend or younger brother or sister who had been in one of the situations.

1. You and three friends are on your way to a birthday party when you pass a group of young people who appear to be having a fight. You have seen one of them with a knife.
What would you do?
2. Your younger brother / sister has left their bag on the stairs. You pick it up and notice there is a knife

in the bag. You confront your brother / sister who confirms that as a result of bullying at school, a knife is being carried for protection.

**What would you advise them?
What would you do?**

3. You are out shopping with friends when you walk past a girl who is known for carrying knives. She approaches you and asks why you are staring at her. You say that you are not but she warns that she will be coming for you at school on Monday.
What would you do?
4. How should the issue of young people carrying knives be tackled? Suggest possible approaches with good and bad points for ways to ensure young people are kept safe in school. For example you may consider metal detectors on entry to school, better publicity about the dangers, harsher penalties, etc.

The Law – Multiple Choice Q and A

Read out the following questions and three possible answers for each. Explore each question with the young people and after discussion, reveal the correct answer.

Once you have read the correct answer, explore other possible sanctions that the students would suggest; for example is a four-year maximum sentence enough for bringing a knife into school?

1. It is illegal for any shop to sell a knife to anyone under the age of?
A. 18
B. 9
C. 25
ANSWER = A. 18
2. What is the longest prison sentence for carrying a knife in school?
A. 6 months
B. 4 years
C. a caution
ANSWER = B. 4 years
3. Which of the following items could be regarded as a weapon if used to harm someone and could result in a charge of possession of an offensive weapon?
A. Screwdriver
B. Pen
C. Hockey stick

ANSWER = A, B and C. An offensive weapon is defined as any article made or adapted for use for causing injury or intended for doing so.

4. What is the maximum penalty for carrying a knife or article with blade on school premises?
A. 1 hour detention
B. Up to six months imprisonment
C. Up to 4 years imprisonment
ANSWER = C. Up to 4 years imprisonment.
5. What is the maximum penalty for getting someone else to look after a knife for you?
A. 1 hour detention
B. Up to 6 months imprisonment
C. Up to 4 years imprisonment
ANSWER = C. Up to 4 years imprisonment

True Or False Questions

1. Carrying a knife to defend yourself is an acceptable excuse in law.
ANSWER = False
2. A recent survey has shown that up to 1 in 3 children has carried a knife.
ANSWER = True (From Be Safe Project)
3. You are less likely to be attacked if you carry a knife.

ANSWER = False (More people who carry knives are hurt. If an attacker has a weapon and they know you do too, they are more likely to hurt you first)

4. Nearly half of all people who carry knives have been injured by their own weapons.

ANSWER = True (From Crimestoppers)



“No one will mess with me if I carry a knife”

Teacher / youth worker advice and information to impart to students or to remind students who have received the input.

Advice re knives and how to stay safe

- Never carry a knife – it gives a false sense of security
- Carrying a knife significantly increases the risk of YOU being stabbed or injured. Your own knife can be used against you or someone may attack you in “self defence”
- Carrying a knife is against the law – you could get a criminal record which will affect job and travel prospects
- How would your family or friends feel if you were arrested for carrying a knife? How would you feel if a younger brother or sister carried a knife because they had seen you do it and then something happened to them as a result?
- Using a knife, even in self defence, can destroy someone else’s life, their family’s lives and your family’s lives. Being present when someone else uses a knife can have consequences for you
- Walk away if confronted with the threat of violence
- Tell somebody you trust – a parent, a teacher, friends, the police.
- You do have a choice.

If you know someone who carries a knife contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**. Calls are anonymous and cannot be traced.

Or send a text to **88551** and include their name, nickname, school, year and postcode/area. This may save someone’s life.



Teacher Support Information - Knife Issues

“I only carry for protection – I feel safer carrying a knife”

It is important to emphasise that you are no safer carrying a knife than if you don’t.

If someone knows you have a knife, then they will actually be more likely to attack you first because they’ll see you as more of a threat than someone who doesn’t have a knife.

It is against the law to carry a knife. Carrying a knife for protection is still carrying an offensive weapon – the maximum sentence is 4 years in prison. Think, do you really need to carry a knife?

If you don’t feel safe in a situation, get away from it. Carrying a knife to deal with a problem is not the answer. The situation is likely to escalate, meaning you could get hurt or you could hurt someone else.

“No one will mess with me if I carry a knife”

This is never true. If people know you carry a knife, parents, teachers or the police will get involved. If you are found in possession of a knife the consequences could be serious.

“Most of my mates carry a knife”

This is unlikely. Most young people do not carry knives, but some might say they do.

Do you really feel the need to carry a knife just because some other people say they do?





Guns

Aim of subject

- To know what the law states about replica guns
- To understand the risks of carrying a replica gun
- To understand the consequences of carrying or using a gun
- To understand the risks of owning an air weapon

The law states:

1. It is illegal to possess an imitation firearm (anything that looks like a gun, including bb guns etc) in a public place, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.
2. It is illegal to use a gun to intimidate or threaten violence. This includes pointing a toy gun at passers by in the street. The maximum penalty is 10 years in prison.
3. It is illegal to get someone to hide or carry a dangerous weapon for you. The maximum penalty is 4 years in prison for a knife and 10 years in prison for a gun, and an even harsher penalty if that someone else is a child.

In addition to all of the above

Airweapons

- It is illegal to sell an air weapon to any person under the age of 18
- Even if you are on private land, if you fire a pellet outside that land it is an offence

Replica firearms often look and feel exactly like the real thing. There is a serious concern that a young person with a replica firearm could get shot by a police officer. Be safe. Do not carry a knife or a gun or anything that has the appearance of a gun

Discussion

Possible Questions

1. Think back to the armed challenge scenario from the guns and knives presentation when the young male with the toy gun pointed it at a member of the public in order to get some alcohol from an off licence. His actions led to armed police officers attending and issuing a challenge.
Was the police response fair? How do you think the incident should have been dealt with?
2. **Can police officers ever really know whether they are attending a serious armed robbery or a young person's prank? Could they tell if a gun is real or fake?**
3. **Why do young people want to carry guns?**
They might think it is cool or gives them a form of credibility or acceptance in a gang or power, or even as a form of self-defence.
4. **What are some of the negative influences that may cause young people to want to carry guns?**
TV, cinema, video games, music, peer pressure.
5. **Would the police response have been any different if the young male had been in possession of a knife?**
It is very likely that armed officers would attend a knife incident with less lethal weapons e.g. baton, baton gun, PAVA (pepper spray), TASER, dog



Guns - Air Weapons

The aim of this section is to get students to think about air weapons (and also BB guns) in the context of the impact that such weapons can have on the lives of individuals and communities. People could be accidentally or purposefully injured or killed by these weapons.

The laws that apply to replica guns also apply to air weapons.

Q and A

1. Can a 15-year-old buy an air pistol from a local gun shop?

ANSWER = No – It is an offence to sell to anyone under the age of 18.

2. If you are 18 can you possess an air weapon in a public place?

ANSWER = No – It is a serious offence to possess an imitation firearm or an air weapon in a public place.

3. Can you use an air weapon on private land?

ANSWER = Only with permission of the landowner, and if any pellet goes beyond the boundary it is an offence.

4. What could be the consequences of a young person possessing an air weapon or BB gun?

ANSWER = Accidental or malicious firing, involvement of police, injuries to self and others.

Gangs

The issues surrounding gangs can be complicated. It is important to try and distinguish the difference between groups of young people hanging around together in public places to socialise and those situations where groups of young people take over public areas to intimidate other people and commit crime.

Discussion Exercise

What are gangs?

■ A group of people who join together for shared purposes often to intimidate other people and commit crime.

Why do young people in certain areas feel the need to become part of a gang?

■ Young people may feel they have something missing in their lives.

■ Gang membership gives a sense of belonging.

What could be the possible consequences of getting involved with a gang?

■ Being in a gang increases the risk of getting yourself or your family and friends hurt.

■ Peer pressure into committing crimes or possessing weapons.

■ Families could fall apart or young members of families could be influenced and get into trouble.

■ Ultimately the police will get involved.

Can you design an advertisement to warn young people away from gangs?

For further information and guidance you may wish to look at:

www.knifecrimes.org

www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.gameover4knives.com

www.gunsandknivestakelives.com

www.fearandfashion.org.uk

www.gun-control-network.org

www.shadowcs.co.uk

www.crimestoppers.co.uk

www.southyorks.police.uk



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