



26 March 2019

Safeguarding and Safety Update

Dear Parents / Carers

Knife and Weapons Crime

I doubt that there is a parent/carer or member of staff who is not concerned and worried about the increasing incidents in which young people are involved in knife crime. It is shocking and tragic to see the number of these violent incidents increasing. I hope you will be reassured to know that as a school community, we are working closely with the police and other schools to give our students robust and consistent advice and keep them safe.

You will find attached to this letter a second letter written jointly by all of our local schools and our police colleagues. The letter sets out warning signs for you and signposts where to go if you have any concerns.

In order to strengthen the message we give to our students about carrying knives or weapons of any description, we are proposing to carry out random bag searches over the coming weeks and months. This raises the profile of this very important matter: we have always been very effective here at Colmers in preventing students bringing in weapons and we think this will help all students understand how seriously we must all take these matters. In the first instance we will let students know in advance we are carrying out the searches so that they get used to how it works. Over the next term, we will then start doing random checks. The process of identifying students for these checks will be carefully considered and recorded so that individuals and groups understand the searches really are random and that they are not being targeted.

If you have any concerns about this or would like to know more about the approach we are taking, do not hesitate to get in touch.

Road Safety

I would be grateful if you could reinforce with your children that it is essential to cross the A38 at designated pedestrian crossings. I am sorry to have to report that some students are crossing the road dangerously, not using the pedestrian crossings. At times, they are doing so even though cars are travelling at fast speeds in close proximity. The safety and well-being of our students is our top priority so I would be grateful if you could reinforce the importance of crossing the road safely at all times.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to keep all of our students safe and well here at Colmers.

Yours sincerely,

Ms E Leaman
Headteacher



COLMERS SCHOOL
& SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



Dear Parents/Carers

Police and schools in the city are committed to working together to protect our young people from becoming victims of knife and weapons 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 crucially, 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, but 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, tool box 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

You may wish to contact a member of the Senior Leadership or 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.

If you or your child are aware that other young people in school or the community are carrying knives or weapons, you should contact the police directly via 101. Alternatively you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via www.crimestoppers-uk.org

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

SCHOOL POLICY FOR WEAPONS POSSESSION

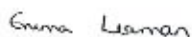
It is essential that we work together to reduce the chances of children bringing a weapon to school. Ours, like most other schools, will take firm action in relation to any student found to be carrying a knife, both on and off the school premises, and the police will be informed. This will include the use of permanent exclusion as a sanction.

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 result will be a charge and court appearance or a caution delivered by the Youth Offending Service.**

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

Yours faithfully,



Emma Leaman
Headteacher
School Name



John Denley
Chief Superintendent
West Midlands Police



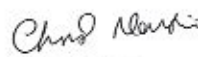
Kenny Bell
Chief Superintendent
West Midlands Police



Jane Chan
Headteacher
Bartley Green School



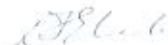
Simon Franks
Headteacher
Turves Green Boys
School



Chris Martin
Principal
St. Thomas Aquinas
Catholic School



Bernadette Pryzbek
Headteacher
Kings Heath Boys



Rebecca Elcocks
Principal
Four Dwellings Academy



Debbie James
Headteacher
Swanshurst School



Julie Ann Davies
Headteacher
Hillcrest School



Damian McGarvey
Headteacher
Balaam Wood School



Mike Dunn
Headteacher
Dame Elizabeth Cadbury
School



Anthony Hamilton
Headmaster
George Dixon Academy



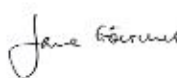
Andrew Lomas
Headteacher
Hunters Hill College



Jo Cottle
Head of School
Bournville School



Anna-Marie Wood
Faculty Head, Higher
Education & Academic
Studies
Bournville College



Jane Gotschel
Headteacher
Lordswood Girls' School



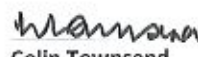
Chris Field
Headteacher
Selly Oak Trust School



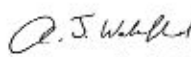
Lee Williams
Head of School
Lordswood Boys'
School



Roger Punton
Principal
Ark Kings Academy



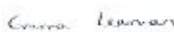
Colin Townsend
Principal
University of
Birmingham School



Andrew Wakefield
Principals
The Edge Academy



Neil Jones
Headteacher
Turves Green Girls'
School



Emma Leaman
Headteacher
Colmers School



Jessie Elbaz
Headteacher
Harborne Academy



Nicola Raggett
Headteacher
Kings Norton Girls'
School



Dave Clayton
Headteacher
Kings Norton Boys'
School



Lisa Darwood
Headteacher
Selly Park Girls' School