



16 October 2024

Dear PCS Families

We encourage you to take a moment to discuss the contents of this letter with your child. Should you have any concerns regarding your child, please do not hesitate to contact the school and request to speak with a member of our Safeguarding Team (DSLs).

Maintaining a Safe Environment at Peacehaven Community School – Knife Arch

As you may be aware, all local schools are collaborating closely with the East Sussex Police to educate, inform, and safeguard our young people from the risks associated with knife and weapon-related crimes. As part of this initiative, we have been conducting workshops for students across all year groups, led by the police, to address the increasing concern around young people carrying knives. These workshops also emphasise the serious dangers and consequences of carrying such weapons.

On **Thursday 14 November**, a Knife Arch will be installed inside the school **from 8.15am**. Students will be asked to walk through the arch and, if any potentially dangerous items are detected, students may be subject to a bag search. In the event of such a search, parents/carers will be informed.

Please note that there is no specific issue with knife crime at Peacehaven Community School. However, in light of recent national news, this is an important preventive measure and we would like to thank East Sussex Police for their continued support. We also appreciate the cooperation of parents and carers in working together to educate and protect our young people.

We would also like to reassure you that we are aware that students with Special Educational Needs may need a different experience going through the Arch and those students will be supported by the SEND team if needed.

Additional Information and Support

It is crucial that schools, the police, and families work in partnership to ensure the safety of our young people. Parents and carers play a vital role by remaining aware of warning signs and having open conversations with their children about the dangers of carrying weapons. The consequences of being found in possession of a knife are severe and serious, impacting future education, employment, and travel opportunities; and most importantly, posing a significant risk to life.

Some young people may believe that carrying a weapon offers protection or increases their standing among peers. However, the unfortunate reality is that they are more likely to become victims of serious violence.

Parents and carers should also be mindful that girls may sometimes be asked to carry or store weapons for their boyfriends or male friends under the false belief that they are less likely to be stopped by the police. Nonetheless, being found in possession of a knife or weapon is a crime, regardless of the circumstances.

The Law

It is an offence to carry a knife in a public place (such as a road or in a school) or to carry any article which has a blade or is sharply pointed.



It is also an offence to carry an offensive weapon in a public place. This includes any article made, adapted or intended for causing injury eg: knuckle duster or bayonets, broken bottles.

Carrying a knife includes: in your hand, a pocket, in the boot of your car or if someone else is carrying a knife for you.

Exceptions include if you are carrying the knife as part of your job, such as a tool for a trade.

However, forgetfulness, ignorance to the law or general self-defence are not reasonable excuses if you are caught carrying a knife.

It is an offence to use any knife in a threatening way (even a legal knife).

It is also an offence to sell a knife to anyone under 18. If you are concerned that your child has been sold a knife, you can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau to report the trader to Trading Standards.

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?

How to support your child if you are worried

For information from the Home Office about how to support your child if you have concerns regarding your child and knife crime, please go to:

http://www.knifecrimes.org/000904_KNIFE_A5_LEAFLET.pdf

Alternatively, please go to the following website:

<https://noknivesbetterlives.com/parents/having-the-conversation/>

At Peacehaven Community School, we will continue to educate our school community to be wise in the choices we make for a safe community.

Yours sincerely

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Headteacher

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Assistant Headteacher - Safeguarding Lead (DSL)