

6 June 2025

Dear PCS Families

We're writing to you today about an important proactive measure we're taking to ensure the continued safety of all students at Peacehaven Community School. We encourage you to discuss the contents of this letter with your child. Sussex Police has contributed to this letter and is organising this event with PCS.

### **Maintaining a Safe Environment: Knife Arch Screening**

As you may know, local schools are working closely with the Sussex Police to educate and safeguard our young people from the risks associated with knife and weapon-related crimes.

**On Tuesday 1 July**, a knife arch will be installed inside the school from 8:15 AM. Students will be asked to walk through the arch. If any potentially dangerous items are detected, students may be subject to a bag search, and parents/carers **will be informed** if such a search occurs.

We want to reassure you that there is **no specific issue with knife crime at Peacehaven Community School**. This measure is a preventive step in light of recent national news, and we are grateful for the continued support from Sussex Police. We also appreciate your cooperation in working together to educate and protect our young people.

We understand that students with Special Educational Needs may require a different experience when going through the arch. Our **SEND team will provide support** to those students as needed.

### **Additional Information and Support**

It is crucial that schools, the police, and families partner together to ensure the safety of our young people. Parents and carers play a vital role by being 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. Most importantly, carrying a weapon poses a significant risk to life.

Some young people might believe 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**.

Please also be aware that girls may sometimes be asked to carry or store weapons for 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, such as a knuckle duster or bayonet, or broken bottles.

**"Carrying a knife" includes:** having it in your hand, in 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 of 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](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

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).

Thank you for your continued partnership in keeping our school community safe.

Yours sincerely

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