

Knife crime

During SHAPE this year all of our students were spoken to by PC Pedley and Alison Cope.

They gave a clear picture of the dangers of carrying a knife and the horrific consequences this can have. Alison's son Joshua Ribera was stabbed and murdered in Selly Oak in September 2013, he was well known within the grime music scene as Depzman with over 60 million views of his music videos on youtube. Alison told his life story leading up to the night of his murder and how many lives were changed that night by the actions of one person. Many students and staff were deeply moved by Alison's story and PC Pedley's insight into the whole issue of knife crime was both informative and very real.

We have continued to raise awareness of this topic with the young people at Wood Green through the tutor programme during Knife crime awareness week. The topic will be looked at again in the forthcoming SHAPE day for Year 8 looking more specially at individual's choices. It is unclear as to how many young people are carrying knives because the police only become aware of this if an incident occurs and knives are then found. But in the West Midlands there are 100 knife crime offences a month. The emerging weapons which the police are aware of are:

- The machete – this is not illegal to buy but is illegal to carry.
- The domestic knife – seen in most people's kitchens and can be bought anywhere
- The cyclone knife – the sole purpose of this is to maim or kill.

The majority of Knife crime in our region appears to be robbery related or a violence issue between young people (15-29 years old) and not gang related, where someone chooses to take a knife a dispute follows and the weapon is used. Today the government is talking about how to reduce knife crime and the role that schools play in this preventative work.

On a wider scale we need parents to be aware, parents to talk to their children about keeping themselves safe and the consequences of making the wrong choice of carrying any weapon. If you have any concerns or questions please do not hesitate to talk to us or seek advice from West Midlands Police 101 or in an emergency call 999 or



Homelessness

A family becoming homeless or at risk of becoming homeless is a concern which was raised in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) and one which we all need to be aware of. If you know a family who maybe at risk of being made homeless or are homeless please let me or Mrs Smith know as a matter of urgency. The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) increase the requirement that Sandwell MBC has to help all those eligible.

Definition:

- Someone who has no home where they can live together with their immediate family
- Can only stay where they are on a temporary basis
- Do not have permission to live where they live
- Have been locked out of their home and cannot return
- Cannot live at home because of violence or threats of violence against them or anyone else in household
- Live in a vehicle or a boat and have nowhere to put it.
- OR if it is not reasonable to stay in their home – cannot afford it or their home is in poor condition.

Impact on children

- Low academic achievement and employability in later life
- High absence and/ or lateness to school
- Poor health and physical safety
- Lack of involvement in enrichment activities
- Enjoyment in life
- Life chances
- Emotional and behaviour problems

What to do if concerned?

- Tell us
- We will then look to a referral to Children's services and look at support from external services (see below)
- Give added support in school through staff awareness, greater access to learning hub, homework club, extra funding for any trips, uniform, equipment or activities.
- Solve any travel issues or caring roles
- Identify a key worker – normally the SSM
- Meet parents and establish concerns, support and advice
- Organise food vouchers – www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200145/benefits_and_grants/2576/local_welfare_provision
- Fuel vouchers (as above)

External agencies

SMBC Housing solution – 0121 368 1166 or (out of hours) 0121 569 6883

Local offices – Wednesbury which covers this area and Leabrook, Golf Links, Woods Metsy and Friar Park ground Floor, Wednesbury Town Hall WS10 7DF

Private tenants advice - 0121 569 5232/CAB – 0344 111 4444

Advice for young people - St Basils (16-25 year old) through Housing Solutions team

Places of welcome for a cup of tea and company – www.placesofwelcome.org.uk

Please be aware



We have been made aware of a new "craze" going around called the Rubber challenge. Apparently young people rub their skin with an eraser as hard as they can while reciting the alphabet or other phrases. The result of the challenge is burns and skin abrasions.

Obviously this needs addressing and we ask that parents speak to their children about it, as we are as a school, and check their arms in particular to ensure that they have not been drawn into this fad.