

NO KNIVES, BETTER LIVES.

Integrating knife crime
prevention and education into
Curriculum for Excellence

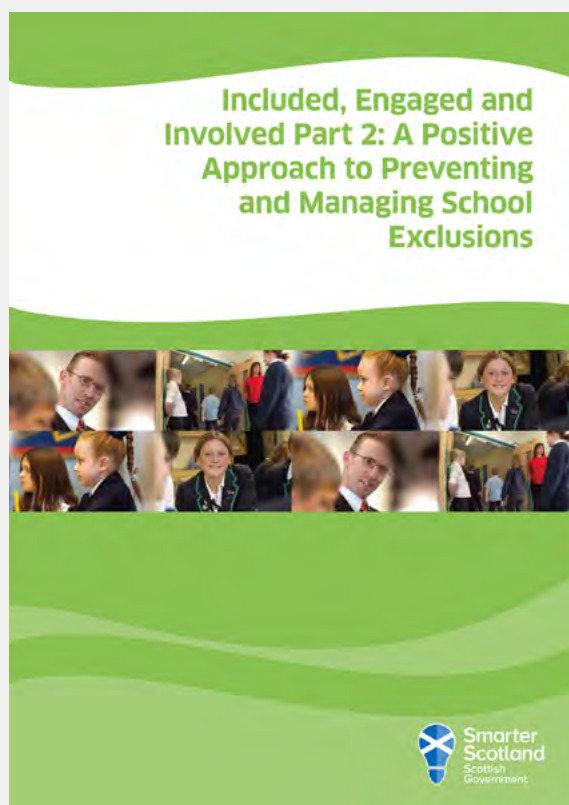
No Knives, Better Lives

INTEGRATING KNIFE CRIME PREVENTION AND EDUCATION INTO CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

This guidance is intended to support those working in secondary schools (including external partners) to design and deliver knife crime prevention work. It outlines the need to address the issue of knife crime, offers advice on incorporating prevention work into the school curriculum and provides information about what works when talking to young people about knife carrying. It also contains information about the NKBL resources available to support schools to deliver prevention work.

This guidance is not intended to support the development of school policy related to weapons and dealing with specific incidents related to knife carrying. For guidance related to managing incidents involving weapons please refer to **“Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions”** (Scottish Government, 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00521260.pdf>



THE NEED FOR KNIFE CRIME EDUCATION AND PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

Violent crime is currently at a 42-year low in Scotland and crimes of handling an offensive weapon are at their lowest since records began. The number of young people convicted of handling an offensive weapon has fallen by over 82% in the last 10 years. But, its important that we continue to talk to young people about knife carrying. Why?

1. Research tells us that very few incidences of knife carrying are brought to the attention of the police (although this is starting to change) and conviction rates for knife carrying do not necessarily reflect the prevalence of knife carrying. Many NKBL partners report that knife carrying is still a significant issue in their local area.
2. Prevention work is often initiated in response to a crisis situation but, by its very nature, should have the aim of preventing something happening in the first place and, importantly, to prevent it from reoccurring in the future. Knife crime is currently on the rise in the west of Scotland.
3. It is important to ensure that young people are fully aware of the potentially devastating personal and legal risks and consequences of carrying a knife, in the same way that we ensure they have all the information they need to make informed decisions in relation to other risk behaviours.
4. The stakes are incredibly high. Anyone convicted of carrying a knife can face up to 5 years in prison. Carrying a knife creates the possibility of using it or having it used on you and any violent incident involving a knife is always potentially fatal.

INCORPORATING KNIFE CARRYING EDUCATION AND PREVENTION INTO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

There is no one model for incorporating knife prevention work into the school curriculum and schools will want to tailor the approach they take. Here are some suggestions and recommendations to help inform your approach.

- Taking a whole school approach – Limiting prevention work to those pupils who may be considered more at risk limits the impact that prevention work can have in relation to positive peer influence and changing peer group norms. It is important that all pupils are aware of the risks and consequences associated with carrying a knife.
- Incorporating into PSHE – This can be done either as a stand alone topic or as part of wider programmes focused more on understanding and reducing risks, building resilience, addressing interpersonal violence and developing social competence. This may involve input from external partner agencies like Police Scotland.
- Incorporating into existing peer education programmes – This can be a dimension of existing peer education programmes or Mentoring Violence Prevention programmes. More information on the MVP programme can be found here: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/inc58mvp-overview>
- Incorporating into specific curriculum areas - See the Links to Curriculum for Excellence section below.
- Incorporating into extra-curricular activities - NKBL themed 5-a-side tournaments are a popular approach for many NKBL partners delivering school based prevention work.

LINKS TO CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Prevention work with young people should extend beyond learning about the risk and consequences of carrying a knife. To be effective, prevention work must build resilience and support the capacity of young people to understand and manage risk, conflict and peer pressure. It must engage young people in a consideration of values, norms and responsibilities and support critical reflection on the wider societal and cultural influences which inform these. Prevention work related to risk behaviours is most commonly delivered as part of the Health and Wellbeing syllabus.

NUMERACY AND MATHEMATICS

The analysis of statistics related to knife crime and knife carrying (either as part of wider knife crime education projects or as a specific subject related activity) is an interesting way to bring statistics to life and provide the meaningful context known to support the development of numerical skills

LANGUAGES

Researching and learning about complex social issues like knife crime and wider youth violence supports the development of skills related to understanding complex concepts and texts, communicating detailed information and sourcing and accessing information.

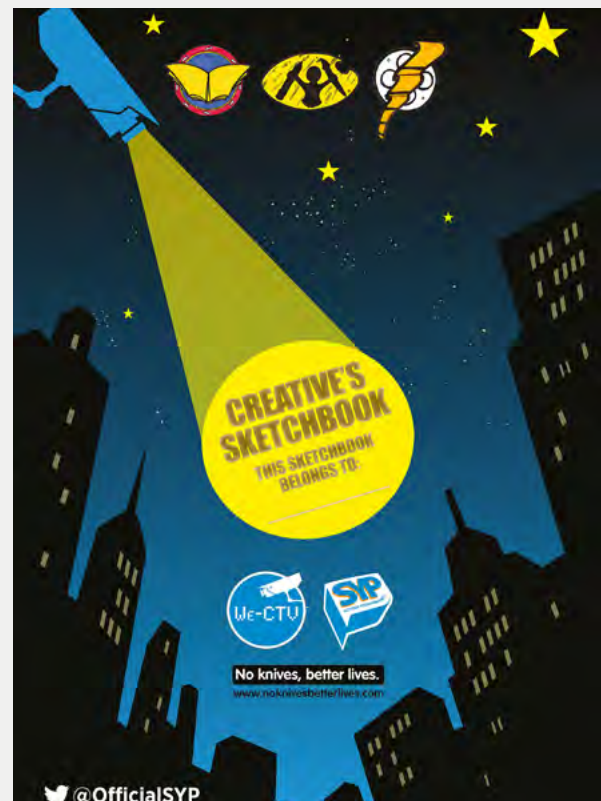
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION

Effective prevention work should support young people to reflect on their own values and to explore the morality of certain behaviours and choices. It

should also encourage young people to think about what they might do if they know that someone else is carrying a knife (moral responsibility). The NKBL resources are informed by the “bystander approach” which aims to empower young people to challenge and influence values and norms within their peer group.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Expressive arts are a powerful medium for exploring social issues and developing and reflecting on our own values, norms, beliefs and behaviours. NKBL has, in the past, supported a national school based film making competition (We-CTV) and guidance is available to support schools and pupils to develop a similar project.



SOCIAL STUDIES

Modern studies students have the option (as part of the Crime and Law unit) to independently explore the issue of knife crime. This involves gathering information that can be used to assess the causes and impact of knife crime in Scotland and to understand and evaluate different approaches to addressing knife crime. There are a number of NKBL resources below that can support this work.

NKBL recommends the webpage developed specifically for Modern Studies students by the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research. This webpage has a number of briefings designed specifically to support pupils studying National 5 or Higher Modern Studies, who have chosen to carry out an assignment relating to the unit of Crime and the Law.

<http://www.sccjr.ac.uk/work-with-us/courses/learning-resources-for-schools/>



The screenshot shows the SCCJR website's 'Learning Resources for Schools' page. The header includes the SCCJR logo and navigation links: HOME, ABOUT US, PROJECTS, PUBLICATIONS, WORK & STUDY WITH US, NEWS & EVENTS. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a banner image of a group of people jumping in a field, followed by a 'FEEDBACK REQUEST - HAVE YOU USED THESE RESOURCES?' section. Below this is a paragraph asking Modern Studies pupils or teachers if they want to know more about crime and law. The text explains that the webpage was created by SCCJR for Modern Studies learners and offers assignments for National 5 or Higher Modern Studies, and for Advanced Higher students. It mentions that briefings on the page reflect popular topics from previous learners' assignments and dissertations. A section titled 'How to use this resource' explains that the briefings provide an overview of topics and include links to further sources like government reports and academic research. A sidebar on the right lists 'Work & Study with us' options: Study with Us, PhD Work Register, Learning Resources for Schools, Current Vacancies, Associate Membership, Visiting Fellowships, and SCCJR Capacity Building Scheme.

SCIENCES

We have developed a specific activity (in the NKBL Sharp Solutions Toolkit) called "What's the Damage" to explore the myth that there are 'safe' places in the body to stab someone. This activity is very popular with young people and practitioners and may be a useful resource to support learning related "the structure and function of organs and organic systems and relating this to the basic biological processes required to sustain life" (Biological Systems).

TECHNOLOGIES

Prevention work that involves young people as peer educators or as co-designers of school programmes and campaigns are a great opportunity to support and enhance learning related to digital literacy and the use of graphic media to communicate ideas and information. Students might, for example, design presentations, promotional material and social media content on preventing knife crime.

EFFECTIVE KNIFE CRIME EDUCATION AND PREVENTION: WHAT WORKS?

To be effective knife carrying education and prevention should be informed by the 4Rs of prevention.

1. REASSURANCE

Ensuring that young people are aware that knife carrying is not common. This is important as protection is a common reason given for knife carrying. While knife carrying is an extremely serious issue, communicating the idea that it is more prevalent than it is or using frightening images of knives and knife wounds can exacerbate the problem.

2. RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES

Ensuring that young people are aware of the very serious legal and personal risks and consequences of carrying a knife. Young people are often unaware of the legal consequences of carrying a knife and the impact that knife crime can have on individuals, families and communities. They often think that carrying a knife offers them protection when in fact it puts them more at risk. The experience of NKBL partners suggests that young people are much more affected by prevention information that focuses on personal risks and consequences (particularly impact on family if someone is caught carrying a knife or uses a knife) and first hand accounts of the experience of knife crime victims and the family of victims.

3. RESILIENCE

Information on risk and consequence is not enough. It is important to recognise that young people carry knives for reasons of fear/protection or status/belonging. Effective prevention work helps young people to be more aware of the influences, fears and pressures that can lead to the decision to carry a knife, and how these can be managed or avoided. This requires that prevention work is participatory and interactive.

4. RESPONSIBILITY (REPORTING)

Ensuring that young people are aware of the importance of acting if they know that someone else is carrying a knife and that they know how to do this safely.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

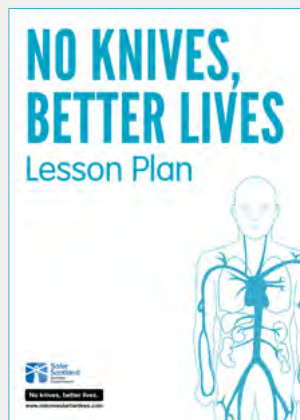
NKBL resources are freely available and can be downloaded from the NKBL website. Hard copies of toolkits and lesson plans are available on request. NKBL films can be found on the NKBL YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-OgTmKZy-ghKiipmTXIGQ9g>

Here is a list of our main resources and some recommendations for using them.

NKBL LESSON PLAN

A 40-minute lesson plan developed for use in secondary schools. We recommend you start here and where a longer programme is required use activities from Mark's Story and the Sharp Solutions Toolkit to expand on key themes and learning.



SHARP SOLUTIONS TOOLKIT

A toolkit designed to support practitioners working with young people to develop learning opportunities related to knife carrying and knife crime. It is a collection of activities that you can use to engage



young people in learning about: the risks and consequence related to carrying a knife; the influences and pressures that affect choices and behaviours; how to manage these and make positive choices and decisions.

ONE KNIFE, MANY VICTIMS (MARK'S STORY)



A hard hitting film and companion toolkit of activities. Marks' night kicks off like any other, but a decision he makes will turn his life upside down. It's not just his life that's ruined, his decision affects everyone around him.

PEER EDUCATOR HANDBOOK

A toolkit for young people who want to talk to other young people about knife carrying. It provides guidance on the role of a peer educator and lots of activities that can be used to develop a peer education session.



For further advice and information contact the NKBL National Delivery Team.

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