



**Sure it's hard talking
to your child about knives.
Not half as hard as
never talking to him again.**

**A guide on how to talk to
your child about knives.**

Home Office

IF THERE'S A KNIFE IN YOUR CHILD'S HANDS, IT'S IN YOUR HANDS TO STOP IT.

Kids face all sorts of pressures and it may be that your child is in contact with friends who carry knives. The chances are your child has talked about knives with friends or heard a story about the kid who carried a knife. Whilst many young people do not carry knives – it is still a conversation worth having with your child.

You have a role to play in helping your child make the right choice on this subject. If there is one person your child will listen to, it's you. They respect you more than you think.

This leaflet holds practical advice for parents/carers on what they can do to reduce the likelihood of a child carrying a knife. We aim to give some pointers on what to look for, how to raise the subject and who to contact if you need more help.

WHAT YOU CAN DO - **KNOW**

Find out about the law. Before talking to your child about knives, you might want to consider the following points:

- It is illegal to carry any knife if there is intent to use it, even defensively, as a weapon. Even if the knife belongs to someone else, such as a friend or a boyfriend.
- Police can and will search someone if they believe they are carrying a knife. Police and school staff can also search young people for weapons at school.
- Carrying a knife could mean being arrested, going to court and ending up with a criminal record or even a prison sentence. This can affect the rest of someone's life. Having a criminal record can prevent that person getting a job, going to university or college or even travelling abroad to some countries.



If you would like to find out more information about knife possession, please visit our website at www.direct.gov.uk/talkaboutknives

You could also get in touch with your local Neighbourhood Policing team who will talk to you in more detail about the law and knives. If you are worried about your child, you might want a local officer to talk to your child or ask the school to arrange a talk. Your policing team could give anti-weapon talks at your child's school.

To find out who your local Neighbourhood Policing team is please visit www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk

WHAT YOU CAN DO - **TALK**

- Have a chat with your kids and see what they think about carrying a knife - you may have seen something in the news about knife crime that you could discuss.

- This can be a tricky conversation – your child may be scared or unwilling to talk about this. But it is never a bad thing to talk and it's important to be clear that your child does have a choice, even when they think they may not.
- Think about raising these points with your child;

By carrying a knife you:

- have a false sense of security;
- could be arming your attacker, increasing the risk of getting stabbed or injured;
- are breaking the law.

Not carrying, and walking away from confrontation:

- is what the vast majority do;
- is the tougher thing to do;
- means you'll be safer from serious harm and not breaking the law.

WHAT YOU CAN DO – **WORK TOGETHER**

- You're not alone! Have a chat to your kid's friends' parents. If you're worried, they probably are too and it's always good to talk about these things.
- Other parents may see your child when you don't and you see their child – by working together you can keep a better eye on their behaviour.
- Are there other members of your family who could lend a hand in talking to your son about this? Perhaps dad, uncle or older brother?
- Work together with other mums and with your child's school to raise awareness of this issue and get advice.

WHAT YOU CAN DO – **LOOK OUT**

Most kids decide they need to start carrying a knife because they feel threatened. Signs to look out for that may suggest your child is feeling this way are:

- school's not going well / they don't want to go in to school at all;
- they've been a recent victim of theft/bullying/mugging;
- a different network of friends who may be older than your child.

Remind your child that they should always walk away if confronted with the threat of violence.

WHAT YOU CAN DO – **GET SUPPORT**

There are many organisations out there willing to help if you have concerns about your child.

You can contact your local authority for a list of local groups and organisations who can offer advice, as well as information on setting up your own group.

There are lots of organisations who will give one to one support. Listed on the back of this leaflet are national organisations that are there to help.



CASE STUDY

‘WHEN MY MUM SITS DOWN AND SPEAKS TO ME, EVEN IF I DON’T TELL HER STUFF, IT MAKES ME THINK’

Ian, 16, talks of his hopes for the future and how the love and respect he has for his mum has guided him.

I am seventeen next month and I ask myself, if things keep going this way, where will I be in a few years time? What will happen to me? I will be dead.

I have had a gun pointed at me, blades pulled on me and mates have been killed on the street. You feel it’s not safe if you are not carrying – people don’t understand, it’s not a choice, it’s a way of life in the area we live in.

I was in the cells for the second time and things changed for me - it was seeing the pain on my mum’s face. The worst thing you can do to your mum is let her see you in the cells.

Your mum is always there, you can talk to her – we have fights, we argue – but we will never say we hate each other. It’s the love my mum has for me that has inspired me. If she can make it legit, why can’t I?

I have started working with a construction company I’m on a training course that will take me through to being an apprentice.

I still have my brothers [friends] and they look out for me but I don’t want any part of the bad stuff anymore.

Mums need to take time, one to one with their kid – without going off on one and shouting. A mum should be like ‘I am not here to fight you, I can help’. Try to get the kid on a course or show them there are other choices and ways to make it legit.

When my mum sits down and speaks to me, even if I don’t tell her stuff, it helps make me think, think twice about getting into that stuff.



USEFUL CONTACTS:

Parentline Plus – a national charity that works for and with parents. They give advice on all aspects of parenting and are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call free on 0808 800 22 22 or log on to www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Victim Support – this national charity can help you and your child if they have been a victim of knife crime. Go to www.victimsupport.org
Tel. 0845 30 30 900.

Neighbourhood Police – To find details of your local team and find out more about the work they are doing in your area, enter your postcode at www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk or call your local constabulary.

To find out more about what other mothers are doing:

Mothers Against Violence – a voluntary group comprised of mothers who have been affected in some way by gun and knife violence. Go to www.mothersagainstvviolence.org.uk

Mothers Against Murder and Aggression – a national support group for families bereaved through murder. Go to www.mamaa.org

KnifeCrimes.org – an online knife crime resource offering advice and support. Founded by Ann Oakes-Odger the site is also a forum to share and read about parents and expert views on knife crime in the UK. Go to www.knifecrimes.org/

Other interests and activities for your child

It's important that you encourage your child to get involved in positive activities and explore any interests they have.

To find out what activities are happening in your area contact your local council and ask to be put through to the youth service department.



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