

## **Guidance for schools managing the disclosure of information where school children may be at risk of accosting or other crime.**

On occasions information comes to the notice of schools or police that an unknown individual has accosted or attempted to abduct children or young people travelling to or from school. Thankfully attempted abductions are rare but when they do occur school staff and police officers need to work together to ensure a proportional response that minimises risk and disruption within schools and maximises potential for apprehending the assailant.

Usual practice dictates that when such an incident takes place the police are informed immediately and the Head Teacher of the school is alerted to any threat so that a risk assessment can be undertaken. Initial gathering of information and support to the child/children involved should be followed by consideration to disclose the information more widely and agreement for this is often determined locally between police officers and staff involved.

There may be cases where it is in the interests of children and the wider community to alert other schools and police areas that such a threat exists. In such circumstances uncoordinated disclosure of information can lead to unnecessary anxiety, urban myths and damage to criminal investigations or undermine potential for subsequent prosecution. It is therefore vital that a co-ordinated and consistent approach is adopted when information needs to be disseminated. On occasions this will also involve alerting parents to potential threats and providing accurate, appropriate and agreed information is crucial if the effective management of the incident is to be achieved.

**It is essential that no information should be released to parents, clusters of schools or the media without prior consultation with the police. Responsibility for ensuring this practice is maintained lies with Area Education Officers (AEOs) and Headteachers who are usually managing such incidents locally.**

**Please remember**

- **Any disclosure of information should be accurate and the wording agreed between Education staff and police.**
- **Any disclosure should consider the reliability and extent of the information, the necessity to disclose, how much information should be disclosed and the likely impact on children, parents, the public and any investigation or subsequent trial.**
- **Where any disclosure is made then the wording of the disclosure should not be altered or disseminated further without prior agreement with the police.**

School Staff and Police Officers are reminded that where alleged perpetrators are known, either the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures and / or the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements should be followed. To consult on this or the release of information when an accosting may have taken place, please contact the Local Authority's Education Safeguarding Team who have the established contacts to provide a link between schools and police in such circumstances.

Any questions arising from this guidance should initially be directed to **Kel Arthur Principal Officer**, Education Safeguarding Team on 03000 415788

Other useful numbers:

<b>North Kent</b>	
Area Safeguarding Adviser (Education)	03000 412445
Area Education Officer	03000 414302

<b>West Kent</b>	
Area Safeguarding Adviser (Education)	03000 412284
Area Education Officer	03000 412209

<b>East Kent</b>	
Area Safeguarding Adviser (Education)	03000 418503
Area Education Officer	03000 418794

<b>South Kent</b>	
Area Safeguarding Adviser (Education)	03000 415648
Area Education Officer	03000 414989

<b>Press Offices</b>	
KCC	<b>03000 418080</b>
Police	<b>01622 652150</b>