

What can you do?



Talking and listening

The most important thing is to encourage the child to talk to you and to both listen to each other.

Share with them your concerns and highlight the risks of carrying a knife so that they can understand. Encourage them not to associate with people who carry knives.

Get to know your child's friends

When young people start to feel pressure to use drugs, drink alcohol or carry knives, it can come from their friends.

Know what they are doing online

Communicate with the child about the potential negative consequences of online activity, including what he or she may post online.

Spend time online with the child. Ask them to show you his or her favourite online activities, sites and online contacts.

Peer pressure

Help the child practice simple ways to respond to peer pressure. For example, if your child was challenged by a peer who says, 'if you were my friend you would' your child can respond with, 'if you were my friend, you wouldn't ask.' Then he or she can walk away.

Find out what they know

Find a way to talk about knives directly. If it helps, use reports in the news or storylines on television programmes as a starting point. The child may know more than you think and will have opinions.

Offer encouragement, don't judge

Remember that they are growing up in a different time from you, facing unique challenges. Discuss their hopes and aspirations as well as their fears and worries. Praise them for their achievements and make sure they know you are always there for them.

Take time out together

Make time to have fun, eat meals together or take trips.

Help is available

For further information regarding knife crime please visit the suggested organisations below:

- Family lives, parenting advice – www.familylives.org.uk
- Fearless, guidance about all kinds of crime that affects young people. Aimed at professionals, parents and young persons – www.fearless.org
- No Knives, Better Lives – a program devised by the Scottish Government to educate about knife crime. Suitable for professionals, parents and young persons – www.noknivesbetterlives.com
- Ben Kinsella Trust – a website set up after the murder of Ben Kinsella to educate society about knife crime – www.benkinsella.org.uk
- #knifefree – A Home Office website containing information about knife crime and real life stories of those affected by knife crime – www.knifefree.co.uk

Help the child practice simple ways to respond to peer pressure



A parents and carers' guide to knife crime



What are the signs?
What can you do?



Kent Police

How can you help keep your child safe?

As parents and carers we play an important role in protecting young people but it can be difficult to know how.

The most important way is to maintain a close relationship with the child and keep talking. Having that close relationship will help you recognise any changes in their behaviour and their activities.

Why do young people carry knives?

There are many reasons why young people may carry a knife. The most common reasons are

- Peer pressure from friends and associates, because everyone is doing it or to be accepted by the group.
- Rebelling against parental/family principles or risk taking behaviour – sometimes young persons will want to establish their own identity and do things that are against the beliefs of their family.
- For protection or out of genuine fear due to being targeted or bullied. There is a strongly held belief amongst young people that carrying a knife makes them safer. Actually, carrying a knife makes them far more likely to be stabbed themselves.
- A desire to be seen as bigger, stronger or tougher than the next person. To be the leader you have to bring something that no one else does, that could be carrying a knife or some other weapon that makes them stand out from the crowd.



If a young person stabs someone then there is the potential for life imprisonment, regardless of whether it is a fatal stabbing or not

Consequences of carrying a knife

There are many potential consequences some more serious than others.

If a young person is caught with a knife at school they run a real risk of being permanently excluded as well as getting a criminal record

This could be the first step on the crime ladder which can affect their future life hugely. This could limit career options, holiday destinations, relationships with family and friends.

If a young person uses a knife in an offence, for example a street robbery, then as well as a criminal record, a prison sentence is highly likely, regardless of if this is a first offence.

If a young person stabs someone then there is the potential for life imprisonment, regardless of whether it is a fatal stabbing or not.

What signs should parents look for:

- Is anything missing from your knife block or fishing tackle box?
- Approximately 74% of knives used in crime are domestic kitchen knives. The next most common knife used is a combat style knife which accounts for 4% of those used in crime.
- Does the child have any unexplained injuries that they are trying to hide from you? How could these have happened and why is the child trying to hide them?
- Does the child appear nervous or fearful when they are going out? What could they be scared of and why?
- Is there a reluctance to say where they are going and who they are going out with? Could this be to somewhere they know you wouldn't approve of within a peer group who are a negative influence?
- Be aware of what online activity the child is involved in. In this technological age most people research things online first, before they do anything. Has the child been searching online for questions about knives or places to buy them?

Approximately 74% of knives used in crime are domestic kitchen knives

Peer pressure from friends and associates, because everyone is doing it or to be accepted by the group

